

Marketing and Merchandising Concepts for School Food Services



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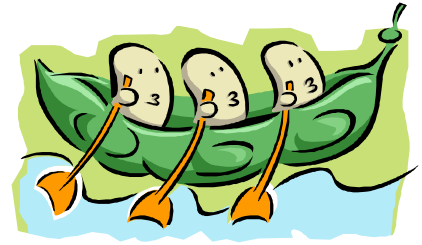
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INTRODUCTION

Marketing is determining our customers' needs, calling their attention to the benefits of Child Nutrition Programs, and creating interest in wise food choices.



Develop a Marketing Plan

A marketing plan is an overall strategy used to promote and enhance the image of Child Nutrition Programs. Your school lunch program is competing with fast-food franchises, lunches from home, and other food sales on campus. Increasing awareness of your healthy school meals and making your cafeteria a fun place to eat will increase customer participation and sales -- and that will increase the number of times a child consumes a healthy meal!



Identify Your Customer

Determine who makes the decision about whether to eat a school meal or not to eat a school meal. Generally, several people influence the students' decision, including parents, peers, and teachers. In order to assist children in making responsible nutrition choices, you must also include all these groups in the marketing plan.

It is also helpful to know certain information about your customers including geographic data, demographics, services offered, audience, and competition.

What makes the customer decide to select a school meal? Other choices are available such as no lunch, lunch from home, other food service on campus, and going off campus. Assessments such as interest surveys, focus groups, YAC's, and parent focus groups can help determine what students need and want from the school meal program. If their wants differ from their needs, you must find ways to bring these two things closer together.

Identifying your customers will help you better understand their needs and values. Your competition has targeted your customer's needs, so you need to know them too, if you want to keep their business.

Publicize and Promote the Program

Through a planned program of publicity, attention is called to the Child Nutrition Programs and their benefits to students, parents, and teaches. Publicity may include using print and electronic media, the school newspaper, and menus sent home or posted in the classroom. Other promotional activities include: personalized trays, contests, training tables, theme menus, and National School Lunch and Breakfast activities. The use of menus as a management tool to promote school meals is valuable.

Merchandise the Program

Merchandising takes place in the cafeteria and can create interest in relating food choices to nutrition. Display point-of-service information on the line where customers experience the first stage of food acceptability, appearance of serving line and food item presentation. Provide contrasts in colors, texture, and temperature. Self-service merchandising bars can speed up serving lines and offer variety. Keep in mind how supermarkets put emphasis on display and make merchandise visible. Attractive pictures of merchandising are also effective in school cafeterias. Merchandising begins with the way the dining area looks and smells. A spotless environment, made attractive with fresh bulletin boards and/or plants, tables and chairs, creates the first impression. Nutrition messages through table tents, bulletin boards, and point of sale information create interest in nutrition and its relation to the food available.

Making the serving counter attractive includes activities such as pan arrangement on the line, garnishes on the foods, and most of all food on the line at its peak of freshness: glowing green broccoli, apple wedges that look as if they were just cut, and gleaming crusts on rolls that let the students know they just came from the oven.

Build Partnerships

Managers must sell their staff on the team effort. Opening channels of communication among groups concerned with school food service brings many benefits to the assessment process and to the marketing plan. Making partners of food service staff, teachers, administrators, students and parents can also provide new ideas and a sense of ownership that boosts morale. A key element of merchandising is making it easy to buy into. The partnership may be effective here as the key players affect scheduling and other logistics -- and they do make a difference.



Employees and the cafeteria setting together make up the image -- happy, caring, well-trained employees make a difference. Make the employee feel a sense of ownership. Their attitude can determine the success of any program.

Service with a Smile

One of the most important parts of your marketing plan is making sure that each customer who comes through the line feels special and is served quality food in pleasant surroundings by compassionate people. This may be the most important element in building the students desire to select healthy food which they enjoy eating. Child nutrition personnel who feel good about themselves and know the importance of their jobs in relation to the students' health and education will go that extra mile to provide service with a smile and to promote healthy food habits for a lifetime.



Successful Marketing Programs

1. Develop and implement realistic, easy-to-follow district and school marketing plans and budgets that support the program's mission.
2. Include cafeteria promotions in district and school operational plans and communicate activities through the school calendar.
3. Evaluate and update marketing plans.
4. Track public perception about the program over a period of years and incorporate results into the district and school operational plans and marketing plans.
5. Conduct research, such as surveys or focus groups, to determine customer expectations as a basis for making marketing decisions.
6. Design marketing activities that address the wants and needs of specific segments of the market, such as students from single parent families, student athletes, adolescent girls, teachers, vegetarians, and reduced-price students.
7. Communicate customer expectations to staff and administrators.
8. Train staff to implement marketing principles and strategies described in the marketing plans.
9. At a minimum address the introduction of new food products and recipes and nutrition education activities in marketing plans.
10. Encourage student, parent, faculty, program staff and allied health organization representatives, and the district's public relations director to participate in the development of marketing plans.
11. Adopt a color scheme, logo, or slogan on printed materials that presents a consistent appearance that is easily identifiable with the program.
12. Post sanitation scores in a prominent location and share them with the community.
13. Handle potential public relations problems proactively.
14. Analyze strategies used by competitors to determine if they can be incorporated into marketing plans.
15. Provide access to appropriate computer hardware and software to assist with marketing efforts.
16. Prepare foods with appealing aromas that permeate the cafeteria.
17. Provide choices of nutritious and popular items within groupings of menu items, including entrees, fruits, desserts, beverages, vegetables, and breads, according to the age of the customer.
18. Attractively display and garnish foods.



19. Serve food that customers recognize as safe to eat.
20. Prepare foods in forms (sizes and shapes and temperature) that can be manipulated by the customer to promote easy consumption within the time allotted for dining.
21. Purchase foods of the highest quality and nutritional value possible, consistent with the budget.
22. Provide a variety of cold milk offerings.
23. Consistently serve quality food items that meet the customers' expectations.
24. Make chilled water accessible in the cafeteria at no additional cost to supplement the meal.
25. Remove products from serving lines when they are discolored, dried out or no longer look appealing.
26. Include unserved portions in subsequent production planning only according to established standards of acceptability for their use.
27. Serve consistent products at the appropriate temperature each time they are offered.
28. Ice down cold foods on the serving line and use kale or other greens to decorate the serving lines.
29. Season food items according to standardized recipes to appeal to the customers' tastes rather than your own.
30. Keep a self-serve bar and serving line supplied with foods and assign employees to check at scheduled intervals for both neatness and temperature.
31. Select packaging and dinnerware options to showcase or compliment the natural colors of the foods.
32. Select the form, packaging and/or dinnerware option in which the menu item is served so that the highest quality item is available to the customer.
33. Hold foods in warming cabinets for minimal periods of time as specified in the standardized recipe.
34. Place condiments in the serving or dining areas to promote access by the customer and assign employees to check at scheduled intervals for neatness.
35. Promote the sale of meals that meet nutrient standards over the sale of single servings of food with low nutrient density or that compete with the meal for students' money or appetites.
36. Create appeal by decorating dining tables for special occasions or using table tents to communicate messages.
37. Use colorful signage, awnings, wall /ceiling hangings, and partitions/dividers to make the environment more appealing, attractive, and quiet.
38. Ensure that serving and dining areas are clean, attractive, and well-lighted.
39. Enhance the attractiveness of serving lines with decorations or food sculptures at all times.
40. Provide a variety of dining furniture that includes round, rectangular and square shapes, and booths and barstools to promote social interactions among customers.
41. Provide comfortable dining furniture that is age appropriate for all students and accommodates students with special needs.
42. Schedule employees or janitors to clean tables, chairs, and the floor between meal periods.
43. Feature décor and seating arrangements that are non-conventional and non-institutional.
44. Use window treatments, plants and music to create a pleasant, cheerful atmosphere in the cafeteria.
45. Establish and communicate to parents and students procedures for meal payments, including charges and prepayments that make purchasing meals convenient.
46. Set prices that are within reach of the majority of paying students and below those of competitors.
47. Provide adult supervision in the cafeteria to promote order and safety within a student-centered environment.
48. Price combinations of food items in a manner that encourages students to consume a meal that provides required nutrients.
49. Allow students to socialize during meal times as long as noise levels are reasonable in relationship to the number of students in the area.
50. Serve lunch after 10:30 a.m. and before 1:30 p.m., giving consideration to the time breakfast or snack was served and school hours.
51. Schedule, based on customer feedback and observation, an adequate amount of time for students to be served and eat their meal with serving taking no more than one third of this time.
52. Use alternative meal sites, such as portable carts and outside picnic tables, when cafeterias are overcrowded, or when additional serving areas are needed, to shorten the waiting period
53. Display related information to provide learning opportunities for customers.



54. At a minimum change displays monthly to provide information that is current and visually appealing.
55. Place menu boards with current menu offerings, including the variety of choices available, so that they are easily seen by customers. Attractively display samples or pictures of menu options and food choices so that customers see them as they enter the cafeteria and/or the serving lines.
56. Use menu boards and signs to clearly communicate the price and the number and types of menu items included in the price.
57. Use enticing terms to describe menu items.
58. Communicate brands or brand equivalents of products used in the preparation of menus to customers through displays, menus, newsletters, or other means consistent with local policy or procedure.
59. Post the nutritional value of food items or meals at the point where they are offered and served.
60. Plan activities related to the Child Nutrition Programs for school or community health fairs.
61. Include promotions for holidays and for special occasions that appeal to customers. Collaborate with vendors to deliver nutrition messages on milk cartons, promotional items and disposable items such as sandwich wraps, table tents or napkins.
62. Evaluate each marketing event or promotion for use in improving the next similar event.
63. At a minimum, schedule promotions for National School Lunch Week, 5-A-Day (twice yearly), School Breakfast Week, National Nutrition Month, Back-to-School, Thanksgiving, Winter Holidays, and a Spring Celebration.
64. Schedule Crunchy Critter for elementary school promotions.
65. Plan theme days and special events, such as circus days or picnics, frequently.
66. Distribute marketing information that is truthful, accurate, and scientifically valid.
67. Promote to customers the quality of USDA commodity foods used by the school.
68. Provide information in such a manner that local and school newspapers, radio, or television announce the variety of menu choices available in the school. Announce menu options on the school public announcement system or on local or closed circuit television.
69. Plan promotions that support the Dietary Guidelines, Food Guide Pyramid and the school's educational philosophies.
70. Allocate time and resources so that promotions are successful.
71. Post menus in several locations throughout the school and send menus home to parents.



MARKETING ON THE LINE

Before serving begins, check the following:

1. How does the food display look from the customer's side of the line?
2. How much food will you be serving?
3. Do employees know what to do? Give clear instructions and make sure that each person serving knows the portion size that is planned and the correct serving tool to use.
4. Set up a sample plate for each serving area.
5. Are pre-portioned items on the serving line in appropriate quantities for the age/grade group you are serving?



Create an Attraction

The way food is presented affects its acceptance or rejection by the customer. Presentation is the key to inviting selections by the customer on the serving line.

If you are currently serving vegetables or meat/meat alternates from full-size steam pans, try half-size pans. This will allow you to offer more choices and add color to your serving line. For instance, replace a full-size pan of green beans with two half-size pans, one with mixed vegetables and the other with green beans. Why not use two half-size pans and put plain baked chicken in one pan and baked chicken with barbecue sauce in the other. Students will be offered more selections through the use of half-size pans and participation should increase. It gives the serving line a more professional look.

Most vegetables and meat/meat alternates can also be presented in a more appealing and appetizing way. Foods that are colorful, like pizza, require little or no extra touches to make them more appealing. Green beans or hamburgers can appear as very "dull" food items. By adding a garnish, they can be made to brighten up a serving line. Food items come "alive" when a garnish is a contrasting color or texture. A garnish should be placed in one corner or in the center of the food item. The same garnish may be transferred to another pan of food. This allows the food item to be served, without disturbing the garnish. Prior to serving the food item from full or half-size pans, try some of the following garnishes:

- Put 2-3 slices of pickled apple resting on a small bed of endive.
- Place a bed of romaine or leaf lettuce on the item to be served and top with 4-5 carrot curls.
- Fan out 4-5 coin sliced carrots and place on a few sprigs of celery leaves.
- Slice Spanish onions into very thin slices and separate into rings. Overlay 4-5 onion rings and place a sprig of parsley in the center of the rings.
- Cut hard-cooked egg in half lengthwise. Cut each half into 3 slices. Use a sharp, damp knife to keep the egg yolks from crumbling. Arrange slices spoke fashion on top of spinach leaves.
- Slice radishes accordion-style. Fan out slices on a bed of curly endive.
- Slice whole pickles in strips lengthwise and top with carrot curls.
- Place 3-4 thinly sliced tomatoes on a bed of lettuce.

Ready-to-Go Salads

1. Line a plastic container with lettuce leaves. top with a generous quantity of dressed salad greens.
2. Arrange the meat, cheese or other protein elements.
3. Add a colorful garnish such as radish stars or a cherry tomato.
4. Serve in plastic container arranged attractively. (Can also be served in a scalloped taco shell.



Ethnic Finger Foods

- Rice paper rolls filled with a mixture of fresh carrots, celery and mushrooms, topped with soy sauce or sweet & sour sauce and shiitake mushrooms.
- Chicken egg roll straws -- like egg rolls, but shaped like a long thin pen are filled with a mixture of ground chicken and vegetables, deep fried and served with sweet & sour or soy sauce for dipping.
- Vietnamese crepes -- a mix of pasteurized eggs, coconut milk and curry powder -- filled with chopped mung beans, shrimp or shiitake mushrooms.
- Barbecued beef marinated in coconut milk, curry powder, cumin, lemon juice, salt and sugar as served in Thailand. For the final presentation, skewers of beef can be displayed on a mock barbecue grill.
- Meatball picks -- a tray of Italian or Swedish meatballs, speared with frill picks.
- Mexican taco -- soft-shell with cheese nachos
- Pickled eggs -- dipped in beet juice and served with sliced onions -- enjoyed by German populations.
- Pirogies -- filled dumplings -- with solid East European epicurean roots -- three varieties include onion and vegetable, cabbage-filled, or diced cheddar cheese and mashed potatoes.
- Fried green tomatoes
- Chicken drumettes with sweet & sour sauce
- Boiled shrimp dipped in a ketchup-based sauce perked up with Cajun spices
- Mardi Gras Cajun King Cake, shaped like a 4-inch wide oval race track. Fresh-baked bread joined all the way around and covered with purple, gold and green colored sugar. Fill with cream cheese, apple or berries. Cut into little pieces and a tiny plastic baby doll is hidden within it, according to a Cajun tradition. Whoever gets the baby has to buy the next King Cake.
- Barbecued ribs and corn-on-the-cob
- Surimi-filled fried won tons with sweet & sour dipping sauce
- Teriyaki chicken, marinated for two hours in teriyaki sauce served as an entrée with fried rice or as a finger food right off the skewer.
- Kyoto beef - sirloin sliced paper thin and rolled around the green part of scallions, marinated in a light soy sauce and sesame oil -- baked or grilled. Don't overcook
- Small red potatoes - steam, scoop out and fill with scallion cream cheese and top with salmon roe caviar
- Ham and cheese sandwich, baked and cut into small pieces for serving - pour a mixture of Swiss cheese and milk on top of the sandwich and bake.



Creative Garnishes

Because our customers “eat with their eyes”, garnishing is an important part of the merchandising process. The first thing they see is plate presentation, and that determines whether the food will be accepted.

Frosted Grapes

Use a small cluster of 3-5 grapes. Combine one slightly beaten egg white with a little water; brush egg mixture over grapes to coat evenly and thoroughly. Sprinkle grapes with granulated sugar and place on a rack to dry. Use on lettuce leaves to garnish chicken or on top of grapefruit halves.



Onion Fans

Use long green onion. Cut root end off. Remove most of the top portion. Make long slashes at both ends to make fringe-like effect. Place in ice water for about two hours to curl ends back. Use as a garnish for any salad item.

Radish Accordions

Trim ends of long narrow radishes. In each radish, cut 8-10 narrow crosswise cuts, 1/8 inch wide, cutting partially through the radish. Place in ice water for at least two hours so slices fan out.



Radish Mouse

Cut two notches in a relatively large radish with root still in place as mouse's tail. Place sliced radish pieces into notches. Use small pieces of cloves for eyes. Cut off just above main radish surface to allow it to sit flat on a table or dish.

Citrus Cartwheels and Twists

Use lemon, lime or orange that has been thinly sliced. For cartwheels, cut V-shaped notches in rind at evenly spaced intervals.

For twists, cut from outer edge of fruit slice to center and twist ends in opposite directions. Use on meat, fish, poultry or vegetable dishes.



Carrot Curls/Zigzags

Make thin lengthwise strips of carrots, using a vegetable peeler. For curls, roll up and secure with a wooden toothpick. For zigzags, thread on a wooden toothpick accordion-style. Crisp at least two hours in ice water.

Hard-Boiled Bunny

Cut a 1/4-inch slice off the side of a hard-boiled egg to form a flat base for the body. Cut the slice you removed in half length-wise to make the ears. Make a small slit on top of the pointed end of the main body and squeeze gently to open. Carefully put the 2 ears into the opening. Use whole cloves to form the eyes and nose and a cauliflower floret for the tail.

Chocolate Curls

Use a bar of sweet chocolate at room temperature. Shave into curls using a vegetable peeler.



Orange Wedges

Wash orange; do not peel. Cut into 6 or 8 wedges depending on size of orange. Use as garnish or snack -- plain or dipped in sugar-cinnamon mixture.

Orange Stars, Hearts, Diamonds

Cut oranges in half and gently squeeze juice. Flatten halves. Using cutter of desired shape and size, place on peel and press firmly. Remove from cutter.



Orange Faces

Using raisins, marshmallows, cucumber peel, maraschino cherries and nut pieces, you can create "happy faces" on orange slices. The orange faces can be used to garnish hot cereal or pancakes, or to make a lunch or dinner entrée a bit special.

Orange Cups

To prepare orange halves with picot edge, make a pencil guideline around the center of the orange. Insert a small-bladed pointed knife in center of orange at an angle to make one side of point. Remove knife; insert to make opposite side of point. Continue around orange, following line to keep halves equal size. Pull apart. Gently squeeze halves for juice and remove membrane. Fill halves with orange

sections. Top each with a maraschino cherry. Use to garnish ham or other meat, or fill with relishes, fruits, gelatin desserts or ice cream.



Banana Boat

Make a cut through the skin of a banana and take out the flesh. Fill the inside with bright fruit slices.

Melon Bowls

Make a pencil guideline around the center of the melon. Cut out sections between marks and remove. With a sharp knife, make a picot edge around the rim of the basket. Scoop out membrane from basket. Fill with orange sections, grapes, cherries, almonds or pieces of olive.



Grated Orange Peel

Wash orange. Using medium grater, remove only the outer, orange-colored layer which contains the flavor-giving oils. (One medium orange makes about two tablespoons grated peel.)

Slivered Orange Rind

Wash orange. Using vegetable peeler, remove very thin outer layer in strips. With scissors or knife, cut to desired size. Use to flavor biscuits, breads, puddings or as garnish for rice and other vegetables.



Mushroom Treats

Cut off the tops of eggs. Slice cherry tomatoes in half and remove some of the flesh. Place tomato half upside down on top of egg. Decorate with mayonnaise dots and place in a bed of lettuce.

Palm Tree

Cut a paper pattern for palm tree. Place on whole orange and mark outline with pencil. Cut around the outline with tip of a pointed knife, cutting through the peel. Carefully remove palm tree. Use to decorate baked ham.

Frogs

Cut a small portion off the bottom of a hard-boiled egg and make a small cut out in the top so that the yolk can be seen. Make a small tongue from the tomato and put in the cut. Poke small holes for the eyes and put in two green peas. Make frog feet from onion springs or cucumber peel.

Gelatin Cutouts

Prepare fruit-flavored gelatin using $\frac{3}{4}$ amount of water recommended. Pour into flat pan to depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Chill until set. Using cookie cutters, cut out shapes and use to garnish grapefruit halves.

Apple Spokes

Thinly slice apple wedges and dip in grapefruit juice to prevent browning. Use the apple wedges to create a “spoke” effect on top of grapefruit halves.



Vegetable Treats

Use nut pieces and carrot curls to decorate onion people for dip decoration.

Citrus Kabobs

Cut oranges and apple wedges. Wash fresh strawberries and grapes. Dip banana pieces and apple wedges in orange or grapefruit juice to prevent browning and then create kabobs by spearing the various fruits on bamboo skewers. Note: Bamboo skewers are usually available with barbecue supplies.

Pear Fans

Slice pears lengthwise and spread into neat fan-shape. Add a couple of whole strawberries for color.



Green Onion Ferns

Cut off most of the white of a green onion. With scissors, cut the green part of the remaining onion into strips. Place these cut onions in ice cold water where the green strips will curl. Great as a garnish for meat dishes.

Green Pepper Basket

Slice the top off a green pepper and remove flesh. Fill with cauliflower, raw carrots, celery and cherry tomatoes.

Tomato Boat

Cut a peeled tomato into halves. Remove flesh with a teaspoon. Crop the bottom of the tomato to stabilize.

Tomato and Egg Rounds

Slice a tomato and a hard-boiled egg into 6 slices. Put an egg slice on a tomato slice and decorate with green pepper.

Pear Hedgehog

Peel a fruit and cut in half. Remove the core carefully. Make “needles” from almonds and stick into the body. Make the face with pieces of raisins or prunes.

Smart Ideas for Merchandising the Serving Line

1. Consider wrapping sandwiches in brightly colored foil.
2. Serve some items in attractive individual dishes.
3. Garnish a soufflé cup of two ounces of peanut butter with celery dippers or bread sticks.
4. Sprinkle paprika on mashed potatoes, potato salad, tuna salad or other bland looking foods.
5. Garnish a serving tray, salad bar or casseroles. Examples are tomato rosettes, carrot curls, orange or lemon slices and grape clusters.
6. When the meal seems dull, add relish tray of colorful raw vegetables. Your customers will love finger foods.
7. Garnish some salads or plates with a sprig of parsley, kale leaf or other salad greens.
8. When making slaw and tossed salad, add colorful vegetables like spinach, red cabbage, julienne broccoli, green peppers, carrots, etc. NOTE: Use those darker green or red-colored lettuce or cabbage leaves for garnish and color -- don't throw them away!
9. When garnishing pre-prepared plates, consider an orange wedge, which also enhances the aroma of the meal.
10. Garnish salads or plates with hard-cooked egg slices, wedges or halves for color or protein.
11. Remember, some people like onions and an onion ring makes a lovely garnish, which is also easy to remove.
12. For color, consider using gelatin with fruit or vegetables to brighten up your line.
13. Add marshmallows to sweet potatoes or fruit salads for more interest.
14. Perk up meat loaf with a good colorful tomato and vegetable sauce.
15. Serve vinegar when serving "greens" for those who want it.
16. Add chili sauce to hot dogs for greater acceptability.
17. Warm hot dogs in the bun with a melted cheese topping.
18. Pudding garnish ideas include: vanilla wafer, graham cracker or cookie crumbs, peanut granules, multi-colored cookie sprinkles, miniature chocolate chips, one-two miniature marshmallows, small dollop of whipped cream, banana slice, cherry or grape jubilee or even just a chocolate/vanilla swirl.

Self-Service Bars

Think self-service systems! Look at them as a way to increase choices and participation. Start with the number of choices that can be offered successfully and watch the students enjoy and appreciate self-service.

Self-service systems are used to display food and to increase student satisfaction by offering a variety of choices. One may think of a salad bar or sandwich bar as a piece of equipment used for display or service, rather than as a way to offer choices to satisfy students. A "bar" may be as basic as a table with a homemade portable sneeze guard or as refined as a mobile stainless steel serving line with tray slides and sneeze guards.



A stumbling block to success with self-service bars is a fear of the complexity and number of choices one can offer. The first attempt at a self-service bar begins with the number of choices that one is comfortable offering. For example, a salad bar could be started with a bowl of tossed salad greens and a variety of salad dressings. As one becomes more experienced with the procedures for setting up a "bar", expand the number of toppings and choices displayed. It's amazing how easy it becomes and the positive responses of the students are most enjoyable.

A variety of self-service systems are possible as follows:

- Salad bars
- Sandwich bars
- Potato bars
- Soup and sandwich bars
- Taco bars
- Pasta bars
- Fruit bars
- Dessert bars
- Condiment bars

Effective displays can make the self-service bar a fun place for customers to congregate. As a result, people are encouraged to spend more time at the self-service bar and will be exposed to more products, thus increasing the sales opportunities.

By featuring new items and in-season items, the self-service bar can acquire a leadership image. If the self-service bar can build a reputation for innovative imaginative quality merchandise, you will earn your customers' loyalty, encourage frequent visits and increase repeat business.

Self-service bars encourage healthy choices but it is a fact that customers are not going to choose foods which do not look good and are not arranged attractively.



Helpful Hints for Marketing Self-Service Bars

1. Make sure you have all of the necessary components and have enough replacement products before you begin setting up.
2. Learn from others. Look for ideas in professional and trade magazines such as the School Food Service Journal and other food service periodicals.
3. Use all self-service space to the best advantage. Do not allow the salad bar to appear “flat”. Serving pans may contain false bottoms” when small amounts of an item are needed.
4. Repeat the same offerings on both sides of the self-service bar. This is perhaps the easiest way to make your statement and it is the basis of every mass display.
5. Increase unit sales by displaying “go-together” products such as crackers, hard rolls, cheese, breadsticks, and garlic bread.
6. Support your salad bar’s advertising efforts in the local and school newspapers, radio, on the school PA system, as well as on TV.
7. Use good visual balance. It should be organized so that all parts of the display have the same visual dominance and one side does not appear “heavier” than the other.
8. Use the local media to advertise what is to be offered on the self-serve bars.

Salad Bar

The simple salad bar provides green salad and a selection of easy toppings and/or salad dressings. With this salad bar, the green salad may be served either from a large bowl beside the salad dressings or in individual bowls on the serving line with dressings offered separately. More complex salad bars contain a greater number of choices.

Arrangement of the salad bar begins with basic line arrangement, as illustrated, and changes with an increase in the items offered.



The ingredients to be offered on the salad bar are endless. The following is a list of suggestions:

Lettuce	Shredded cheese	Carrot-raisin salad
Spinach	Chopped olives	Coleslaw
Green peppers	Garbanzo beans	Potato salad
Cucumbers	Fresh fruit slices	Peanuts
Radishes	Corn relish	Bacon bits
Tomatoes	Pickles	French fried onion rings
Yellow Squash	Cauliflower	Chopped eggs
Raisins	Broccoli	Mushrooms
Croutons	Celery	Fruit salad
Bean Sprouts	Onions	Cottage cheese
Shredded cabbage (green and purple)	Three-bean salad	Canned fruit
Sliced eggs		

Taco Bar

A taco bar can solve the problems related to the serving of tacos. Let the student arrange the layers in the order he prefers. The cafeteria's responsibility is to prepare and display the ingredients.

Taco bars present a problem because both hot and cold foods must be displayed and proper temperatures maintained. Insulated carriers will keep meat fillings hot.

Arrangement for the taco bar begins with basic line arrangement, as illustrated, and changes with an increase in the number of items or additional toppings served.



Choices of ingredients on the taco bar might include:

- Taco shells - soft or hard
- Meat filling or fillings
- Shredded lettuce
- Chopped tomatoes
- Chopped onions
- Shredded cheese
- Taco sauce



Potato Bar

Potato bars provide a way to use self-service systems and to offer choices with little extra effort. Begin a potato bar with potatoes and meat sauce. Then add a variety of toppings.

The same procedures used for other bar arrangements apply to the potato bar. The first component will be the whole baked potato, followed by the meat sauce, and then the toppings. Temperature maintenance is important. Keep hot food items hot.



Toppings might include:

- Meat sauces: chili, Chicken ala King, barbecued beef, barbecued pork, taco meat sauce
- Broccoli with cheese sauce
- Butter
- Chopped onion
- Bacon bits
- Diced fresh tomato
- Chopped cauliflower
- Shredded cheese

Sandwich Bar

Sandwich bars allow students to build their own "creations" and offer choices with little extra work.

The key to line arrangement is to make sure the sandwich components are presented in the proper order. This sandwich bar diagram is an example of the basic arrangement.



Some items to serve on a sandwich bar include:

- A variety of breads or rolls
- Sliced meats and poultry
- Sliced cheese
- Lettuce
- Onions
- Pickles
- Tomatoes
- Sandwich fillings
- Mayonnaise
- Catsup
- Mustard
- Bean sprouts

- Butter, softened
- Peanut butter whipped with honey, jelly or cranberry sauce

Tips for Self-Service

Build displays with color in mind.

- Display foods in the order that they will be assembled. For example, on salad bars, lettuce should go first and salad dressings last.
- Consider the height of the service equipment in relation to the height of the students being served. For example, elementary children will probably need serving equipment that is lower to provide ease of reach.
- Provide a serving utensil for each ingredient. Serving utensils should assist in portion control.
- Display foods in containers of varying size. More popular foods should be placed in larger containers so they need be replenished less often.
- Display food to minimize spillage of food into other containers. Put foods that will most likely be spilled closest to the customer.
- Assign a food service worker to replenish the food items and to keep the serving line clean.
- Accentuate the product and make sure the products are well displayed.
- Keep it simple. Start with the very basics and train the students to use, not abuse, the concept. Then build on this.
- Make a statement. Use appropriate signs, props and have plenty of product available.
- Merchandise the type of self-serve bar you are offering.
- Keep the bar supplied and select appropriate size containers.
- Replenish items when one-half to two-thirds is empty.
- Spills, drips and misplaced food items should be cleaned up regularly. Arranging food containers so spills are reduced is important.
- Vary selections and be creative.
- Be aware that the variety of items offered should be changed periodically when serving repeat customers.

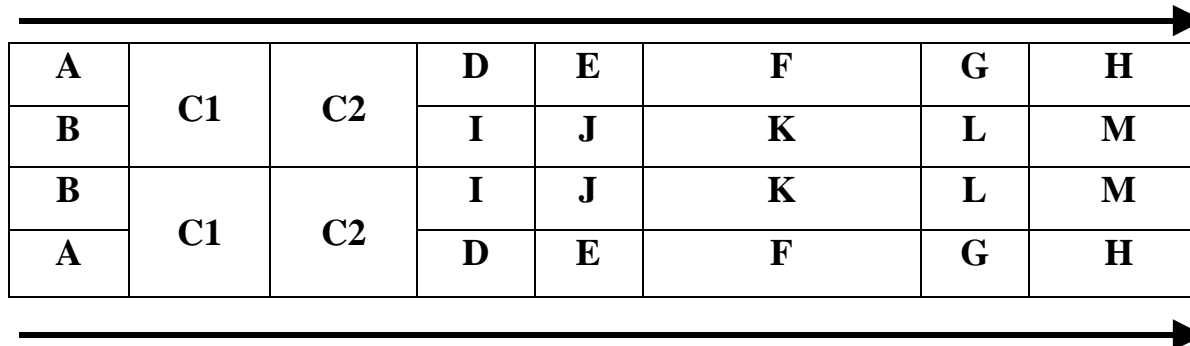


With these suggestions given for each self-service system and these basic rules, you are ready to try self-service.

REMEMBER: All five food items must be offered with self-service.

Self-Service Arrangement Suggestions

Traffic



Traffic

Offering Combinations

Type of Bar	A	B	C1	C2	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
Salad (add protein item)	Plates/Bowls/Trays	Utensils	Shredded Lettuce	Romaine Endive	Bacon Bits Chopped Egg	Diced Tomato Shredded Carrots	Diced Green Peppers	Ranch Dressing Italian Dressing	1000 Island French Dressing	Diced Beets	Garbanzo Beans	Potato Salad	English Peas	Breads, Pretzels, Crackers
Breakfast			Choice of Dry Cereals	Oatmeal or Grits	Fruit Salad	Banana Chips/Raisins	Coconut Chopped Peanuts	Fruited Yogurt	Fruit Sauce	Bananas Oranges	Sliced Pineapple	Individual Fruit Juices	Honey Butter	
Burger			Beef patties Whole Wheat Buns	Chick Fillets Poppy seed Buns	Chili	Sliced Dills	Sliced Onions	Mustard Mayonnaise	BBQ Sauce Catsup	Cheese Sauce	Sliced Tomatoes	Cole Slaw	Shredded Lettuce	
Sub/Sandwich			Sliced Turkey Ham Bologna	Variety of Buns	Sliced Tomatoes	Shredded Lettuce	Piccadilly Sauce	Mustard Mayonnaise	Ranch Dressing Honey Mustard Sauce	Sliced Dill Pickles	Sliced Cheese	Cole Slaw	Pickle Relish	
Baked Potato			Whole Baked Potatoes	Chili with Beans	Cheese Sauce	Cauliflower Flowerettes	Diced Green Onion	Sour Cream	Butter	Broccoli Flowerettes	Chives	Diced Green Pepper Diced Celery	Bacon Bits	
Soup/Sandwich			Sliced Turkey Sandwiches	Cream of Chicken Soup	Oyster Crackers	Croutons Bacon Bits	Shredded Cheese	Mustard Mayonnaise	Ranch Dressing	Vegetable Beef Soup	Shredded Lettuce	Sliced Tomatoes	Pickle Relish	
Mexican			Beef Taco Sauce Taco Shells	Mexican Rice	Cheese Sauce	Diced Green Chilies	Chopped Ripe Olives	Mild Salsa	Hot Salsa	Guacamole	Shredded Lettuce	Broken Taco Shells	Chopped Tomatoes	
Italian			Macaroni Vermicelli	Meatballs Meat Sauce	Marinated Vegetable Salad	Italian Mixed Vegetables	Mozzarella Cheese	Cheddar Cheese	Plain Italian Sauce	Marinated Garden Salad	Vegetable Fettuccini	Italian Pasta Salad	Bread Sticks	

CAFETERIA DESIGN

Provide for planning of a new or modified school cafeteria by teams that include the program director, manager, other administrators, customers, parents, and the architect.

Include cafeteria equipment in any construction contract for a facility and use educational specifications in communicating to the architect and other planners the program's mission and operation criteria essential for the design of the cafeteria to meet customer and employee requirements. Specifications should include information on equipment (large and small), operational maintenance manuals or videos, and orientation for food service and maintenance employees to new equipment by certified equipment representatives.

Always take into consideration future growth of all programs and incorporate this into your cafeteria design.

Design Considerations

1. Separate the kitchen from the remainder of the school by locking doors.
2. Include chilled water stations in the dining room.
3. Ensure that performance of all functions can be accomplished with adequate, non-glare lighting.
4. Ensure that construction meets all applicable codes.
5. Plan square footage in the kitchen and dining areas to exceed state minimum requirements.
6. Design kitchen, serving, and dining areas based on work centers required by the cycle menus.
7. Consider the movement of food from the receiving area to storage, preparation, production, service, and ware washing area.
8. Design the ware washing area to include the dish room with dish machine and its booster heater, tables, and disposer/sink and the pot and pan wash area with storage for air-drying.
9. Provide space for employees to handle returned trays thus eliminating garbage cans in the dining area.
10. Provide space for handling cans, bottles, and other items to be recycled, thus encouraging the reduction of solid waste.
11. Provide locked space for chemical and detergent storage that is separate from storage for food.

Cafeteria Atmosphere

A person's first impression is many times a lasting one and the impression the cafeteria makes upon entrance can and will make a tremendous difference in your program. The overall atmosphere in the cafeteria can make or break your program. Make the cafeteria as bright and cheerful as you can by keeping both the cafeteria and the serving line spotlessly clean and attractive.

- Use bright colors in painting the walls. Soft pastels and neutrals may not be the best.
- Maintain good lighting, especially over the serving area.
- Decorate with nutrition posters and mobiles, murals, art class pictures, or seasonal displays. Invite classes to decorate with artwork or class projects in the cafeteria. Be careful not to over-decorate.
- Hang plants in the dining room and carefully selected music create an interesting atmosphere. However, do not put plants on tables where you serve or prepare food.
- Have students name the cafeteria. A good name can help create a good image.
- Arrange tables in interesting groupings, when possible. Note from observation how students prefer sitting. You may need combinations of small and large groupings.



Kitchen Tours

1. Demonstrate how equipment is used in the preparation of meals and explain the responsibilities of the food service personnel in meal preparation. After the tour, have students draw pictures or write paragraphs about what they thought the most important piece of equipment in the kitchen was, what their favorite section of the kitchen was, or what the best/hardest job in the cafeteria was. Display the students' work in the cafeteria.
2. Arrange for students to observe a day's menu being prepared from menu development through serving. Explain vendor delivery, recipe adjustments, food preparation and serving procedures while stressing storage practices and sanitation.
3. Arrange for students to observe how a new recipe is adjusted and/or prepared and have samples available for students to taste.
4. Divide younger students into teams for a "Treasure Hunt" in the cafeteria. Give each team a card identifying clues for finding the "treasure". As each team finds its "treasure" it must answer a question on the back of the card and report back to the entire group. Such card might ask:
 - a. Where and how are the dishes washed?
 - b. Where and how is the food cooked?
 - c. Where and how are foods measured and mixed?
 - d. Where and how are foods cut-up?
 - e. Where and how are foods stored?
5. Introduce kindergarten students to the school cafeteria by allowing them to roll out cookie dough, cut the cookies, place on baking sheets, and bake in the oven. Then they may have a tasting party in the dining room.



Food Courts

Food courts are an effective marketing strategy because they can provide interesting areas and multiple choices that can attract customers.

Easy, serve-yourself items make serving easy and help customers get through the line more quickly. Make sure that you provide a complete reimbursable meal when using food court-style serving, and make sure your customers understand the competitive food rule.



Marketing and Merchandising Concepts for School Food Services

Seating areas are a major part of the food court experience. Speak with the art director about the possibility of having students redecorate the cafeteria. Use the school mascot if possible and let the students name the dining area.

Try to arrange seating in interesting patterns that allow students to congregate in small groups and vary institutional looking setups when possible. Make sure seating is comfortable and add some plants and table decorations for effect.



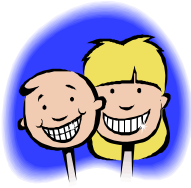
Entertainment is also a great draw for students. Have the music class provide a monthly concert or check into providing the school's in-house feed to television monitors stationed in the cafeteria.

Speak with local barbershop groups or have older grades provide short presentations to the younger students. Make sure these activities do not interfere with the lunch service.



Be creative when planning food courts. If you have an open area outside, consider a cart serving area where children naturally congregate in the mornings. Serve quick bag breakfasts or use the cart outside for hot wrapped sandwiches at lunch. If you can't entice the children into the cafeteria, take the meal to them.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND INVOLVEMENT



Know Your Customers

You must know your customers and you must know what they like and dislike in order that the meals will be accepted. Do not just assume you know. The only sure way to know if you are meeting their expectations is to talk to them regularly, observe plate waste and be actively involved in nutrition education.

A factor affecting meal acceptance, nutrition activities, and communication with your customer is recognizing the characteristics of development the students undergo as they mature.

Remember, customers eat with their eyes. Get their attention with a display plate! Think color -- think contrast -- mix apples and oranges in a bowl. Employees can wear buttons, aprons, hats, T-shirts, or costumes to make promotions fashionable and fun! Music can set the stage for a special Western Day or to announce the upcoming festivities.

Grades K-2

Between the ages of 5-7, your customers are beginning to assert their independence but the major center of interest is still in the home. While they desire to imitate adults or older children, they still have a great love for make-believe and fantasies. They are just beginning to learn about the world through situations with which they are familiar. This causes the customers of this age group to be slow in selecting foods in the cafeteria. Therefore, children need an unhurried time for meal service and ingestion of food. They rely more on foods they are familiar with, rather than tasting new foods. This age group should be encouraged to taste new foods in order to increase the number of foods they will accept. These customers normally do not like foods that are spicy, have a strong taste, or are of a strange texture. They prefer foods that are not combined with other foods and in a form that can be eaten from the hand (finger foods).



To increase their food acceptance, this age group responds to:

- Inviting parents or grandparents to lunch;
- Participating in raw vegetable tasting parties;
- Sliced or sectioned fruit;
- Ice-cream or pudding served with fruit topping;
- Decorating the cafeteria for special occasions and celebrations; and
- Menus printed with pictures of items served (because of limited reading skills).

The following are some helpful tips to keep in mind when feeding young children:

- Keep mealtime atmosphere light and pleasant.
- Encourage the children to talk at the table.
- Don't force children to eat or to clean their plates.
- Plan an adequate length of time for a leisurely paced meal.
- Develop good eating habits.
- Introduce one new food at a time.
- Introduce the new food at the beginning of the meal.
- Continue to serve new foods.
- Respect a child's cultural background.
- Involve children in the preparation and serving of food.
- Serve small portions of food.

Marketing and Merchandising Concepts for School Food Services

- Separate servings of food-vegetables, meats, and salads.
- Serve foods with delicate flavors rather than spicy ones.
- Provide contrast in color, texture (crunchy, creamy, soft) and temperature.
- Praise children for eating and trying new foods instead of commenting on not eating.
- Set an example for table manners.
- Make your table look appealing.
- Encourage children to serve themselves and pour their own milk.
- Do not use food as a bribe or a reward.
- Teach children the names of foods.

When planning menus, remember that students of different ages prefer different kinds of foods.

1. Preschool and kindergarten children prefer foods that:

- Are soft, smooth, or crisp--they do not have enough teeth to enjoy chewy foods, neither do they like gummy or lumpy foods.
- Are lukewarm, rather than very hot or very cold.
- Can be picked up with fingers.
- Have been only slightly seasoned or salted (children actually have more taste buds than adults do, so foods seem spicier).
- Are in combinations with several foods of milk flavor and only one of pronounced flavor.
- Have distinct, separate components (rather than stews and other one-dish meals).

Grades 3-5

As the students enter these grades, they are anxious to assume responsibility. They like to work on group activities, enjoying clubs and abiding by group decisions. These energetic customers enjoy jokes, riddles and rhymes. Food acceptance and nutrition education can be increased by actually involving the students in the cafeteria. Activities such as the following are excellent for this age and they respond to:

- nutrition committees or youth advisory councils;
- special stickers or certificates for their involvement;
- tasting clubs;
- group involvement in decorating the cafeteria for special events; and
- contest involvements such as posters and bulletin boards.

Elementary school students generally eat quite well and enjoy a variety of foods when they are offered. They enjoy:

- Foods with a wide variety of flavors, textures, temperatures, shapes and sizes.
- Introduction of a variety of seasonings and spices since the number of taste buds is beginning to decline and the gastrointestinal tract is fully developed; however they still prefer foods, which are not highly seasoned.
- Learning about foods from other countries and occasionally a well-planned, positively introduced special meal will help build menu variety.
- Being independent and choosing their own snacks. Education at this time should encourage nutritious snacks rather than empty calorie ones.
- Finger foods. They prefer foods with separate distinct parts rather than stews and one-dish meals.

Grades 6-8

Greater interest in social affairs becomes evident as the students reach this age group. Peer approval means much more than adult approval as they aspire for independence. They become more aware of their personal appearance and an increased awareness of self and individual identity emerges. They undergo a personality change towards sex, parents, peers and elders.

- Food acceptance for this group can be encouraged by:
- Stressing foods for healthy skin and hair;

Marketing and Merchandising Concepts for School Food Services

- Special speakers to participate in discussions on overall health; and
- Ethnic meals and nutrition education based around special foods that could be included in the daily menu.

Menus for adolescents should have these desirable characteristics:

- Food choices should be included, and choices should be equal in nutritional value except for calories.
- The most poorly nourished group of American youth is teenage girls. In an effort to maintain a slim, trim figure, teenage girls will often skip lunch entirely if low calorie items are not available.
- Serving size variables should be allowed since many secondary boys have hearty appetites and higher nutrition needs than younger children or girls.

Grades 9-12

Customers in these grades have greater nutritional needs, but their eating habits are often the poorest. They are most concerned about their appearance and weight, which leads to fad diets and unbalanced meals. The living style of these customers is fast so most meals are eaten on the run. They do not like to wait in long or slow lines for food: often turning to vending machines, fast food or skipping meals.

Consider a training table for those interested or actively participation in sports programs. Successful programs have been developed in cooperation with athletic departments in furnishing bag lunches for varsity teams.

These customers will accept foods lower in calories. Provide calorie comparisons of popular fast foods and school lunch as a form of education. Explore ways of speeding up the line, perhaps using a bar concept: salad bars, taco bars, potato bars, pasta bars, soup and sandwich bars, as a means of increasing food acceptance and education.

New Foods

When introducing new or unusual foods, there are several techniques that will encourage maximum acceptability:

1. Introduce new or unusual foods one at a time and in small amounts. Do not plan in amounts to count as a food item in the meal pattern.
2. Have the new or unusual food as an complement to a popular food or in combination with a menu that is popular.
3. Do not mix the new or unusual food into a previously-liked combination dish.
4. Plan the new or unusual food into a special meal, such as a holiday menu.
5. Plan the food into a cultural meal. Work with the classroom teacher to build positive attitudes toward this new experience.
6. Plan new or unusual foods as special foods in honor of school activities (for example, first football game, scholarship winner, etc.).
7. Be sure to purchase packaged items, such as condiments, that customers can easily open.



A person has a better chance of being well nourished if a variety of food is eaten. Food habits can be modified and developed best when a child is young. The earlier that a child learns to eat many types of foods, the more likelihood there is that the child will be well-nourished throughout life.

Always remember to serve the students in your school...not just the food!

What Influences Children's Eating Behavior

Adults may be unaware of the silent messages they communicate to children. At the dining table, whether it be at home or at school, children learn rules about what to eat and how to eat. They develop a sense of portion control, table manners and the timing of eating. Social interaction during meals and at snack time is essential in teaching the rituals of eating; the cultural meanings of food; and the complex physiologic, psychosocial and cultural facts that control food intake. Children appear to emulate parental eating behaviors and learn significantly from conversations about food. They will prefer foods that have been presented with positive attention from adults.



Children also clearly prefer foods they have been exposed to. Repeated exposures to unfamiliar foods are likely to result in acceptance. Research conducted by Contento, Basch and others in 1993 reported data to indicate that families could be grouped according to the importance of beliefs about healthfulness of foods that this groupings predicts the quality of the diet of children.

Given today's lifestyles, many parents are having difficulty attending to the quality of foods eaten. Parents of teens frequently feel unable to affect their children's health habits.

A Norwegian national health survey of 337 families in 1985 included separate interviews with both parents and an adolescent child. The probability of the child having a low-fat intake was five times higher if the mother had a low-fat intake. This parental influence may not change significantly even from the age of 16-20. Additional studies have found significant correlation between the fat and caloric intake of parents and children. From observations about peer influence and familiarity, we can conclude that children would probably learn to like health-promoting foods if they were offered and if adults and peers modeled optimal food choice.

Parents and educators need to become partners in assessing the health messages they give children. If eating habits formed during childhood persist into adulthood, and if we can prevent or delay onset of chronic diseases, we must take the task of eating seriously, while recognizing the realities of today's lifestyles.

Treat Students Like the Paying Customers They Are!

You shouldn't have to solidly depend on name-brand products or other gimmicks to keep your customers coming back. Customers come back because you provide a pleasant atmosphere with good food. For this reason, it is important that students receive the same kind of service that they receive elsewhere when presenting themselves as customers.

Today, children's eating habits are being influenced by factors such as family mobility, working mothers, mass communications and dozens of other things that were unheard of a generation ago. We must realize that changes in the way families eat affect children's eating habits. In the modern family, for example, members often eat at different times. Additionally, many families are eating a larger proportion of their meals outside the home, as can be seen from the growth of fast food restaurants.

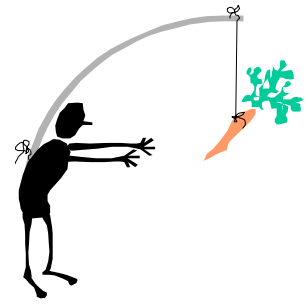
Since kids have more money to spend, they can exercise choices like whether they will use their money to buy a candy bar or a burger. In this sense, children have become "consumers". This means that if we are going to "sell" children on nutritious food, we have to do our job just as well as, if not better than, fast food restaurants and packaged food advertisers.



Surveys show that sometimes a little change is all it takes to turn an unpopular item into a popular one. For instance, serving cold pot roast sandwiches might not go over as well as hot roast beef sliced paper thin and piled on a sesame seed bun.

The Goal: Increased Participation

Achieving and maintaining a high level of participation should be a primary objective of school food service programs. Providing nutritious meals, which students will enjoy eating and striving to encourage participation by as many students as possible should be the concern of food service personnel. Participation levels may never reach 100%, but they can be increased. Compare participation percentages with those in other schools and/or other districts, and try continuously to increase the level of student participation each year.



Analyze the operation to determine reasons for participation problems. Enlist the assistance of students, faculty, administration, parents and community groups in helping to determine reasons for the problems and to provide suggestions for increasing participation. Consult trade and professional journals for solutions other schools have used in increasing participation levels. Utilize the knowledge of local school food service officials. Determine those changes in the existing program operation that can be made fairly easily, without school board approval.

The school food service program is a system with many components such as purchasing, storage, production, service, training, etc.; therefore, a change in one component will affect all other components to some degree. Consider the effect of the proposed change. If necessary, obtain permission of the administration. Announce the proposed changes to the administration, students and faculty. Implement the changes gradually so as to achieve a smooth transition.

Every member of the school food service staff should be informed and involved with any change in operation. Evaluate the impact of the change. Have participation levels increased? Have unforeseen problems been occurring in other areas as a result of the change? Obtain the reaction of students, faculty and administration to the change. Consider the ideas they suggest. If appropriate, make the changes they recommend. Improvement in participation is a gradual and continuous process.

In addition, it is important to remember to respond positively and quickly to viable customer requests and preferences. Customers demand consistency.

Factors Affecting Participation

Management

1. Quality of Food
 - a. Check recipes for ingredients.
 - b. Are the proper preparation procedures being followed?
 - c. Is food being cooked properly and being held under proper conditions?
 - d. Are hot foods hot and cold foods cold when served?
 - e. Are school food service employees properly trained in preparing and serving food?
 - f. Is high quality food purchased?
 - g. Is equipment adequate?
2. Are students able to select between different types of nutritious food items?
3. Is there a lack of variety in types of foods offered each day?
4. Are foods attractively presented on the serving line?
5. Do school food service employees have pleasant attitudes?
6. Do students help in the planning of the program?
7. Do programs offer food items, which students enjoy?
8. Is the quantity of food adequate and are portions standard?



Facilities

1. Dining Room
 - a. Is there sufficient room for eating?
 - b. Is the eating area attractive and is there adequate lighting?
 - c. Are food debris and trash cleaned up and tables and chairs cleaned?
 - d. Does the dining room allow for relatively quiet dining?
 - e. Is the dining room in an accessible location?
 - f. Are tables and chairs in good condition and comfortable?
2. Serving Lines
 - a. Is there enough space in the serving areas?
 - b. Is there enough room to display all food items?
 - c. Can a variety of food items be displayed?
 - d. Are the serving areas close to the dining areas?
 - e. Is the serving area as far as possible from noisy areas?



Administration

1. Do students have minimal waiting time in serving lines?
2. Is the price charged for the lunch reasonable?
3. Do administration and faculty members have positive attitudes toward the school food service program?
4. Is there ample space for the school food service program?
5. Do all students have lunch periods of adequate length for participating in the school food service program?
6. Do all students stay on campus for the lunch period?
7. Does the school food service program project a positive image which encourages students to participate?
8. Are there other nearby restaurants where students may go?
9. Do students have a positive attitude which can encourage their peers to participate in the school food service program?
10. Are other food service programs operating in the school?

Suggestions for Improving Participation

Food

- Highest quality food
- More than one type of lunch
- Choice of entrees
- Main course salad menus
- Low-calorie menus
- Sandwich-soup plate
- Super-lunch for larger appetites
- Choice of milk
- Choice of vegetables, desserts, salads
- Colorful, attractive food
- Hot foods hot, cold foods cold
- Good combinations of flavor, texture, color
- Variety of foods day-to-day
- Cooked fresh, served fresh
- Finger foods
- "Now" foods
- Box or sack lunch to eat outside
- Foods commonly preferred
- Bonus foods, extra portions or new foods
- Suggestion box
- Garnish food on line



Marketing and Merchandising Concepts for School Food Services

- Menu board for informing customers
- Menu phrasing: crisp, golden, luscious
- School names for food: Eagle Salad, Bomber-Burger, Wildcat-Burger, Hilltopper-Hotdog, etc.
- Holidays are special occasions recognized in menus and decorations
- Study of plate waste; try to correct observed problems
- Relate plate waste to cost; use bar charts
- Students involved in taste-test of products

Service

- Fast service, short lines
- Arrange food attractively on plate
- Counter and table decorations
- Line set up attractively
- Seasonal, colored, decorated apparel for servers
- Service with a smile
- Bell ringer special: free lunch to first participant after a bell is rung at random times
- Clean, shining facilities
- Pleasant, attractive, well-groomed line personnel
- Employee nametags: "We want to please!"
- Serve lunch outside: sacks, boxes
- Lucky trays for special treat
- Clock students through line
- Observe bottlenecks that cause long lines
- School colors used for serving aprons
- Several eating areas in building
- Athletic training table
- Private rooms for organization lunches
- Introduce gimmick-free lunch reward
- Student host, hostess greet, seat guests
- Homecoming: two hamburgers for price of one
- Trays with school colors, insignia
- Art class can merchandise food on serving line

Dining Area

- Air-conditioned dining room
- No long tables
- Tables for four: round, square
- Performance by music group
- Booths
- Popular decals on table tops
- Colored chairs
- Draperies at windows
- Murals on walls
- Hang mobiles from ceiling
- Use planters, flower boxes
- Vary table positions for new atmosphere
- Create rooms with screens, planters, tables
- Student host, hostess keep tables, floors clean
- Art displays, rotate among groups
- Attractive bulletin boards - involved parents
- Popular music
- Use school colors



Public Relations

Preparation and service of good quality, nutritious food is the primary responsibility of the school food service personnel. This responsibility is a prerequisite to a successful school food service program. Even if this end is accomplished, it does not ensure a successful program. To affect the success of a school food service program may require a successful public relations program.

Public relations needs should be assessed, after which a public relations program should be planned. Such a program should be on-going. Long-term goals need to be established along with short-term goals that can be accomplished in a year. Goals should be reviewed annually. Included in these plans should be themes for involving the media and for reaching and involving the various aspects of the community. After implementation, the impact of the plans needs to be evaluated. Necessary changes in the plans should be made and the cycle continued.

The purposes of a public relations program are:

- To increase student participation.
- To explain, justify, and defend the need for school food service programs to various publics by informing those interested about the objectives of the school food service program.
- To assist school food service programs in better meeting their goals.
- To increase communication with school personnel.

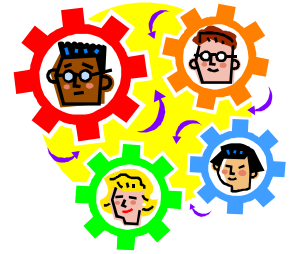
A public relations program needs to be planned and ongoing project, not a spasmodic effort to “put out fires”. The program should include several aspects:



- To inform the various public entities about the school food service programs and involve them, when possible, with planning of the programs.
- To teach the various public entities about school food service program, while utilizing their ideas.
- To utilize promotion techniques.
- Involve students in school food service program
- Cooperate with administration, teachers in other school programs
- Establish good rapport with students
- Present program for civic groups
- Printed menu posted around school
- Invite celebrities to lunch
- Develop a brag sheet
- Open house for parents
- Refreshments for PTA (or other groups)
- Use news media for school lunch stories
- Menus announced on radio by students
- Films for assembly program
- Nutrition-health speaker for assembly
- Teacher appreciation day: free lunch
- Weekly “activities” table
- Serve special school functions
- Refreshments for a faculty meeting
- Contests: posters, nutrition projects
- Famous chef plan menus
- Articles in school newspaper
- Invite college, pro athletes to lunch: take pictures with students
- Leaflets and information available as handouts for classes

Administration

School food service supervisors or managers work within a network of personnel associated with the schools. Influence and impact is often reciprocal. For instance, by working closely with the school principal, the district and/or county school food service personnel can influence administration. In turn, the administration works through the school food service director or manager to implement policy established by the school board. In order to influence the school board (e.g., to gain permission to speak at meetings or to invite members to participate in the programs) the school food service director must work through the administrator.



These efforts with the administration and school board may gain cooperation in activities which will help to better achieve stated goals and may gain priority consideration as budgeted funds are being spent.

- Establish youth advisory council.
- Explain school food service programs for faculty-share facts proudly.
- Encourage participation from health standpoint.
- Improve appearance and atmosphere in dining room.
- Plan schedules for prompt service.
- Close campus.
- Remove competitive food.
- Encourage teacher cooperation.
- Conduct surveys: likes, dislikes, breakfasts, dining area, etc.
- Install health bar in dining room.
- Involve students and teachers: animal feeding experiments, menu analysis for nutritive content, study fluctuation of participation, fluctuation to labor cost per meal, compare price of school lunch with others, figure cost of plate waste.
- Involve parents to understand health implications of eating balanced meals and importance of stable participation.
- Explain significance of school lunch program on local economy, number of jobs, dollar value of food purchased.
- Prepare handbooks to explain school food service program for teachers, student and parents
- Arrange for tours of kitchen to observe sanitation and cleanliness, large equipment, storage, quantity food preparation.

Building a Bandwagon

Involvement of students, the group ultimately to benefit, is essential to an effective public relations and merchandising program. Obtaining ideas from students is part of the merchandising effort. When these ideas are utilized, students realize that school food service personnel are interested in designing a program that reflects their desires and needs.

Merchandising involves promotion techniques to accomplish student appreciation of, and participation in, the school food service program.



Students

Students can be involved in a number of ways:

1. School food service personnel can present information to classes, answer questions, ask for suggestions, and, when possible, utilize the suggestions.
2. Interaction between students and school food service personnel should be encouraged -- in the manager's office, at special functions, during serving periods, etc.
3. Formation of student or youth advisory groups to assist in improving the programs can be encouraged and supported.
4. Student assistance can be used in planning menus.

5. Students may be utilized in developing food purchase specifications through their suggestions of new foods to buy and their participation on taste panels.
6. Work-study programs may be incorporated in school food service whenever possible.
7. Students may be utilized in various studies, such as plate waste studies and in assessments of time allocated for lunch, e.g., recording the time students spend standing in line waiting for service, the time required to eat, amount of plate waste, etc. These findings could be used by administrators of the school and of school food service personnel to improve conditions in the cafeteria.

Faculty

In addition, the faculty can play an important part in the success of the school food service program. Public relations efforts can be directed to the faculty through assisting them in integrating nutrition in the classroom, spotlighting them at various meals, involving them in planning the nutrition program of the school, and involving them in taste panels and menu planning. These efforts with the faculty may earn the respect of colleagues, place school food service personnel as equal partners on the educational team, and increase student participation levels.



Individual Citizens and Community Groups

Individual citizens and community groups have an important role in the school food service program, both singly and cooperatively. Citizens through their taxes and election of school board members have an interest and voice in the school food service program. School food service can involve and influence citizens by inviting them to participate in the program, and by becoming involved in community advisory groups. Seek the advice of the school administrator as to which groups can be most helpful and the ways to approach these groups. Perhaps the preferred approach will be to use the media, to have students speak before the groups, and/or to invite these groups to school for lunch. Such efforts are conducted to solicit ideas from the community and to gain its support. Involvement with community groups must be planned and ongoing. School food service personnel need to become involved citizens and to study community issues, especially those relating to school food service.

Parents

Parents are interested in the health and well being of their children and the relationship of the school food service program to this interest. School food service personnel can invite parents to participate and become involved in the school food service program. In turn, school food service personnel can become involved in the PTA or PTO of the school. These organizations may want to become involved in nutrition education projects where activities are integrated into the school food service program(s). Through such efforts, support of the parents may be gained. In turn, their encouragement of student participation increases the odds that the entire family will utilize nutrition information in the home.



Professionals

Professionals in such areas as nutrition, dietetics, dental health and public health are interested in the nutritional status, growth and development, and general health of the school age population. These professionals are usually eager to become involved in school programs; many wear a second hat as parents. School food service can involve and use these people as resources in nutrition education activities. Through involving such professionals, additional ideas and support can be gained.

Special Events

Celebrating special weeks such as National School Lunch Week, National Nutrition Week, Dental Health Week, etc. should be a part of the school's public relations program, but not the sum total of such a program. Such attention can result in better-informed public entities and activities can be planned and coordinated at the national, state and local levels. Planning is recommended six months to a year before an event.

Communication Skills

As part of a public relations program, school food service personnel should talk before groups, to provide them with descriptions of the roles of school food service personnel, explanations of specific regulations or problems, information about specific activities and answers to any pertinent questions. The school food service director or manager may be an invited speaker as part of the public relations program, or, if not invited, the director or manager can request the opportunity to speak to a group.



Time and effort needs to be given to the preparation of a good talk. Listed below are tips to follow:

1. Have a specific idea or theme for the presentation.
2. Develop an outline of the important points to be considered.
3. Develop an idea or technique to get the attention of the audience at the beginning of the talk.
4. Use statistics about the programs if appropriate.
5. Summarize point in closing.

The presentation can provide information and/or request assistance from the group. Whatever the purpose in giving the talk, the presenter must be knowledgeable about the program so as to appear credible to the audience and should be able to answer all questions. If asking for assistance from the group, the presenter needs to know the cost/benefit to both the group and to the school food service program. as a result of such assistance. In addition, the presenter needs to be able to state clearly what is being asked of the group and why.

In preparing the presentation, one may write out the talk completely or simply develop an outline. It is a good idea to practice the talk aloud before presenting to the group. This practice may be done alone or with others as listeners. Try not to memorize the talk or use jargon or acronyms familiar only to those in food service. Some basic skills and principles of presenting a talk that should be learned are listed below:

1. Capture the attention of the audience at the beginning. A positive statement or an appropriate story applicable to the topic may help.
2. Be sure you are aware of and mention local concerns so that a beneficial relationship can be developed between you and the group.
3. Talk “with” rather than “at” the audience.
4. Speak slowly and know how the public address system works and affects the volume of your voice.
5. Look at the audience and communicate with your eyes.
6. Do not become distracted; do not become irritated or nervous. Remember that you know your message and are before the group for a very worthwhile and necessary purpose.
7. Do not read your talk word for word. Speak to the group -- do not read to them.
8. Consider the use of visual aids and be sure your message does not get lost in a flurry of charts, slides, etc. The visual aids should complement and add to the talk, not replace it.
9. Do not underestimate and “talk down” to the group.
10. Allow time for questions during and after your presentation.
11. Do not speak for a longer period of time than you have been allowed.
12. Indicate that you can be contacted for additional information. Give your phone number and address and make sure the group’s officers know how to contact you.

Media Relationships



The news media needs to be utilized whenever possible because they reach a large number of people, are a credible source of information, and may be the fastest and most complete way to tell the food service story. A working relationship should be established with officials of news media so that when special needs arise, those in the media will know school food service personnel and perhaps be more willing to give their stories good coverage. Make an appointment with news media officials and visit them for a self-

introduction as well as to give them basic information on the school food service program and professional association. Volunteer to provide public service spots, to appear on public information programs and/or to write articles. Invite news media representatives to the cafeteria, show them what the program is attempting to do and invite them to eat lunch on the day of their visit.

When appearing on radio or TV, the school food service advocate must know what he or she wants to say. Speak slowly. Be objective and not critical of others. Speak positively about the school system and the food service program. Invite listeners or viewers to meet to discuss any personal concerns.

A press release can help you communicate the school food service message effectively. Make sure your release is professional and follows some basic rules:

- Use standard 8-1/2 x 11 paper, typed and double-spaced.
- Provide short simple statements that accurately tell your story.
- Make the release short (less than one page).
- The first paragraph should tell who, what, when, where, why and how, so the reader can find out the story quickly.
- Stick to the facts.
- Don't send a release after an event happened or a month or more before the event. Make sure it's news.



Customer Service Self-Assessment

Evaluate your school food service operation by checking the appropriate box.
Score your operation by evaluating a typical school.

Rate the following statements by checking the corresponding response boxes at the right.	Yes	Needs to Improve	No
1. Multiple menu choices are available within each meal component			
2. Standardized recipes yield consistent quality of food.			
3. Students do not stand in line longer than five minutes to receive their food.			
4. Cafeteria personnel appear neat and clean at all times.			
5. Customers are greeted with a smile and served in a friendly manner.			
6. A procedure is in place for staff to handle customer complaints.			
7. Atmosphere of cafeteria is warm and friendly and conducive to students socializing with friends.			
8. Customers are regularly asked for feedback and suggestions to determine their wants and needs.			
9. Your meal is better and more attractive than your competitors			
10. Regular training on customer service is provided to staff members.			
COMMENTS:			

10 Tips to Get Your Kids to Eat Better

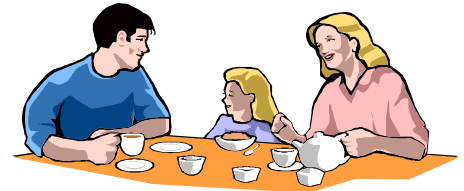


Post these ideas on your refrigerator as a reminder to incorporate healthy eating into your child's diet.

- **Boost the Benefits of Breakfast:** Recent studies show that kids only eat one serving of fruit per day. Give your child a head start on the goal of five fruits and vegetables per day by serving fruit in the morning. Add apple or banana chunks to cold cereal, oatmeal, or yogurt. Serve juice with breakfast or send kids off to school with an apple to eat on the way.
- **Power-Pack Snacks:** Cut up raw vegetables and store them in ice water in the refrigerator. Slip easy-to-eat fresh fruit such as apples, grapes, or oranges in your child's pocket, book bag, or backpack.
- **Give Veggies the Potato Chip Edge:** Keep low-fat dips like cottage cheese or low-fat yogurt next to cut up raw veggies in the refrigerator. It might give the kids the idea of dipping their veggies rather than their chips.
- **Make a 5-a-Day Fun:** Encourage kids to play with their food! With a variety of fruits and vegetables, a few toothpicks, and an imagination, kids can have a healthy good time making such things as a hot rod (a carrot chassis, apple wheels, and a kiwi cockpit) or a space creature (grape feet, toothpick legs, and a radish body with raisin eyes). Afterwards, let them eat their pieces of art.
- **Give Desserts a Healthy Twist:** Try serving fresh berries or raisins on top of non-fat frozen yogurt in place of ice cream, dried fruit instead of candy, applesauce rather than pudding, or air-popped popcorn instead of chips.
- **Serve New Foods One at a Time:** Try serving new foods on the same plate as some of your child's favorites.
- **Let Children Do the Cooking:** Most kids love to cook and to help fix meals. Chances are if you give your child the opportunity to make new foods, he or she will be more likely to give them a try.
- **Prepare Foods in Different Ways:** Most kids like vegetables raw or cooked until just tender. If they don't like a certain kind of vegetable raw, offer it to them steamed, grilled or boiled.
- **Encourage Variety:** Kids will usually try anything once - especially if you serve a new item with other things they like. Keep giving your kids the opportunity to at least try new foods. More than likely, they'll find something they like.
- **Let Your Kids Decide How Much Food They'll Eat:** When children feel the pressure to eat more or less, they tend to do just the opposite. The best thing to do is make healthy foods available and not to keep a lot of sugary or fatty treat as in the house. Discuss any concerns with your family doctor or a registered dietitian.



Student/Parent Involvement



Regulations require that schools promote activities to involve students and parents in the National School Lunch Program. Such activities may include menu planning, enhancement of eating environment, program promotion and related community support activities. The type of parent and student involvement is left to the discretion of the individual school. In this way, the school is given flexibility to plan and implement a program to meet its individual needs. Since involvement of students and parents in the National School Lunch Program is a requirement, schools should document all activities.

The following are examples of activities that schools may use in order to comply with this requirement:

1. Prepare articles and/or pictures for use in the local newspaper or student newsletter. Articles might feature menus, meal statistics, special activities, offer versus serve or nutrition information.
2. Plan menus to highlight special events such as holidays and athletic victories, or foreign countries or specific regions of our country.
3. Invite parents, grandparents or other people in the community to have lunch at school.
4. Plan projects to improve the appearance of the lunchroom. Use bulletin boards, special holiday or seasonal decorations and student artwork, etc.
5. Conduct student surveys on food likes and dislikes and solicit menu suggestions.
6. Conduct a survey and discuss with students possible improvements to reduce plate waste.
7. Discuss nutrition in the classroom. Plan to evaluate one week's cafeteria menus to determine if it includes selections from all four food groups. Evaluate the menus as to variety, texture and color.
8. Make available and encourage the use of nutritious snack foods.
9. Allow one or several classes to plan menus.
10. Encourage the home economics class to plan special diets for overweight and underweight persons that meet the lunch pattern requirements.



Ten Truths of Family Involvement

1. All parents have hopes and dreams for their children. They differ in how parents support their children's efforts to achieve those dreams.
2. Learning takes place in the home, in the school, and in the community. Children benefit most when schools work with, not apart from, other spheres, including home and community.
3. The parent is the central contributor to the child's education. Children benefit most when schools recognize the parent's role.
4. Family involvement is a legitimate element of education. It deserves equal emphasis with elements such as program improvement and evaluation.
5. Parents' and family members' interaction with their own children is the cornerstone of effective involvement. A program must recognize the value, diversity, and difficulty of this role.
6. Any family can be "hard to reach". Treat parents as individuals. They cannot be defined by gender, ethnicity, education, income, or family situation.
7. Successful family involvement nurtures relationships and builds partnerships. It strengthens bonds between home and school, parent and teacher, parent and child, school and community.
8. Many barriers to family involvement are found within school practices. School programs must be tailored to the reality of families' needs and lives.
9. Family involvement is a process, not a program or an activity. It is most effective when it is well planned, comprehensive, and involves continuing revision. Three to five years may be needed.
10. Family involvement requires a vision, policy, and framework. It takes a consensus of goals, a plan of action, and a leader or committee to accept responsibility for the progress of the plan.

Sample Parent Messages

1. When was the last time you had a school lunch? If your answer is “When I was in school,” then it is time for you to make a lunchtime visit to your child’s cafeteria. You’ll be surprised how much has changed!
2. In the year to come, we will be conducting a campaign called _____ in the school cafeteria. Studies have shown that children who are given the opportunity to try new foods early in life are more likely to make wise food choices as adults. You can broaden your family’s taste horizons by selecting new foods to serve. Try variety and add some spice, as well as a variety of nutrients, to your life.
3. Did you know that children and adults need to eat about 50 different nutrients for good health? Fortunately, there is an easy way to get all these nutrients. Every day eat some foods from each of the food groups. Each food group is a source of certain nutrients. Together, the food groups provide most of the nutrients we need. Eating from the food groups daily is what we call a balanced diet.
4. Afraid your children may not be getting all the nutrients they need? How do you know that they are eating the right portion sizes? Did you realize that something as simple as breakfast can help your child do better in school?
5. Children tend to like foods their parents like and dislike foods their parents dislike. You can set an example to encourage good eating habits. Eat nutritious foods and try new foods. Be casual about getting your child to try a new food. Tell him/her to “take a bite”, but don’t force it or make it an issue. In time, your child may eat the new food on his/her own, especially if YOU eat it.
6. Research has shown that in order to get a life-style change, one must have 50 hours per year of planned, sequential activities for a minimum of 3 years. In order to change behavior, one must practice it for a minimum of 21 days.



Parent Pointers

In a society known for its time constraints, more and more families spend a significant portion of their food budget on eating out. Fast food restaurants capture their share of the market to the tune of billions of dollars a year.

Critics have long considered good nutrition and fast food to be mutually exclusive. But fast food is not necessarily junk food. Fast food choices provide some vitamins and minerals and plenty of protein. The real problem with fast food is its excesses -- too many calories, too much fat and too much sodium.

But chosen with care, fast foods can be included in a healthful diet. Here are some ways to improve a fast food meal:



- Cut out the sauces, such as mayonnaise or tartar sauce. You may save up to 150 calories.
- Processed meats are usually high in fat, so avoid bacon on your burger, pepperoni on your pizza and sausage on your biscuit.
- Avoid deep-fried foods that tend to have more fat than grilled or broiled foods. Since many restaurants use saturated fats for frying, the fish or chicken may be no better for you than a hamburger. When you do order deep-fried foods, discard the breading and batter.
- Order fries without salt. Soak up excess grease by spreading fries out on a napkin. For an even wiser nutritional move, order a plain baked potato when available.
- Salad bars in fast food joints are a real blessing. Low-fat, high-fiber, vitamin-rich choices include vegetables, fruits, garbanzo and kidney beans. Opt for vinegar, lemon or low-calorie dressings to top your salad.
- Balance out your daily diet by eating lightly at meals before and after.
- Order only the basics of your meal at the drive-through window. Take them home to serve with low-fat milk, fruit and fresh vegetables.

Student Surveys

The school cafeteria is the school breakfast/lunch program to students, teachers, principals and parents. Merchandising the food quality sends a message that either says “Yes, we care.” or “No, we don’t care.” For some students, repetition of food choices, eating in the same surroundings or food quality causes monotony and dissatisfaction. For this reason, theme days and special events add to the level of customer satisfaction and value of the food service to a students’ life.

Student surveys should be conducted on a regular basis. School food service, through the use of familiar “smiley” faces, may even ask young children their preference. Information collected from these surveys is important when planning menus or developing a marketing plan.

1. Develop a survey calendar each school year to pre-plan the schools to target and approximate dates for the student surveys.
2. Determine what the school food service staff needs to know.
3. Determine when and where the survey will take place, and who will be responsible.
4. Estimate time to do the tabulation.
5. Determine the types of questions: multiple choice, checklists, ranking, yes/no choices, comments, etc.
6. Consider the customers before writing questions. Are your customers K-3 level or high school? Questions must be written that will easily be understood.
7. Prepare a summary sheet to tabulate answers.
8. Test questions to be certain they are clear, simple, and direct. Rewrite as needed.
9. Conduct the survey and tabulate the results.
10. Review the feedback from students.
11. Design marketing plan and write menus that reflect student preferences.



Focus Groups

The use of a focus group has become a useful method in obtaining information about customer satisfaction. A focus group is a randomly selected number of students who are asked to participate in a brief series of meetings. The group may be asked to do the following:

- Provide information on food preferences for menu planning.
- Make recommendations for new menu items or themes.
- Evaluate specific food items or recipes for acceptability.
- Work with school food service staff to carry out the meal choices.

The use of surveys and focus groups will do two things:

1. Take the “heat” off school lunch management. Decisions will reflect the direct input of customers. A well-managed program must reflect customer needs.
2. Demonstrate to customers the programs’ willingness to work with them and to listen to them. Often customers just want to be heard.



School Food Service Survey for Parents



Please answer the following questions about your child's impression of eating meals provided by the school food service and nutrition programs.	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1. Overall, my child likes the school meals served by the food service and nutrition program.				
2. My child receives a variety of foods.				
3. I know what foods my child eats.				
4. My child receives healthy meals.				
5. I know how much my child eats.				
6. My child likes the foods provided.				
7. My child has enough time to eat.				
8. My child eats in a pleasant dining area.				
9. My child likes the taste of the food.				
10. The food service employees are friendly to my child.				
11. My child thinks the foods on the serving line are attractively presented.				
12. My child thinks the dining area is clean.				
13. My child selects nutritious foods from the serving line.				
COMMENTS:				



School Food Service Breakfast Survey

Please answer the following questions about your impression of meals provided by the breakfast program.	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1. I often eat breakfast at school.				
2. Most days I enjoy the breakfast selections in the school cafeteria.				
3. I find the lunch foods in the cafeteria to be well seasoned.				
4. The school cafeteria is a pleasant and interesting place to eat breakfast.				
5. The cafeteria staff is interested in helping me.				
6. The cafeteria line and dining areas are clean and sanitary during breakfast.				

My favorite breakfast foods in the cafeteria are:

My least favorite breakfast foods in the cafeteria are:

Overall, I would rate the school breakfast program: ____satisfactory ____unsatisfactory

I wish the cafeteria served the following foods:

COMMENTS:

School Food Service Lunch Survey



Please answer the following questions about your impression of meals provided by the lunch program.	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
1. I often eat lunch at school.				
2. Most days I enjoy the lunch selections in the school cafeteria.				
3. I find the lunch foods in the cafeteria to be well seasoned.				
4. The school cafeteria is a pleasant and interesting place to eat lunch.				
5. The cafeteria staff is interested in helping me.				
6. The cafeteria line and dining areas are clean and sanitary during lunch service.				

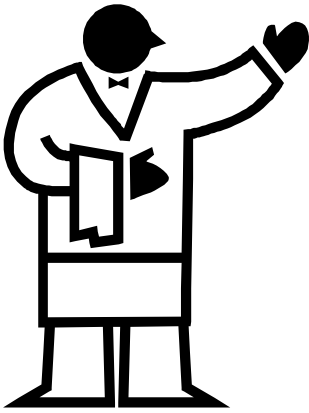
My favorite lunch foods in the cafeteria are:

My least favorite lunch foods in the cafeteria are:

Overall, I would rate the school lunch program: ___satisfactory ___unsatisfactory

I wish the cafeteria served the following foods at lunch:

COMMENTS:



In-Depth Student School Lunch Survey

1. I eat the school lunch.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
2. I buy extra food or drink to add to my school lunch.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
3. I bring my lunch from home.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
4. I buy some food or drink to add to the lunch I bring from home.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
5. The school lunchroom is noisy.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
6. The lunchroom is clean.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
7. The size of the servings at lunch are:
 - a. Adequate most of the time
 - b. Adequate some of the time
 - c. Too large
 - d. Too small
8. The food in the cafeteria tastes good.
 - a. Most of the time
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Never
9. The hot foods (meats, vegetables, etc.) served in the school lunch are:
 - a. Usually hot enough
 - b. Sometimes hot, sometimes not
 - c. Usually cold
10. The cold foods (salads, canned fruits, etc.) served in the school lunch are:
 - a. Usually well-chilled
 - b. Sometimes chilled, sometimes not
 - c. Often lukewarm
11. The cooks in the lunchroom are:
 - a. Usually friendly and helpful

- b. Friendly sometimes
 - c. Not friendly
12. The cashiers in the school lunchroom are:
- a. Usually friendly and helpful
 - b. Friendly sometimes
 - c. Not friendly
13. The food in the school lunchroom is:
- a. Almost always good
 - b. Good only some of the time
 - c. Usually not very good
14. I like the meat dishes.
- a. Most of the time
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Not very often
15. I like the vegetables.
- a. Most of the time
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Not very often
16. I like the desserts.
- a. Most of the time
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Not very often
17. I have to pay extra for dessert.
- a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No
18. I feel rushed during lunch time:
- a. Most of the time
 - b. Some of the time
 - c. Not usually
19. When I eat the school lunch:
- a. I usually eat most of my food
 - b. I usually eat about half of my food
 - c. I usually leave a lot of my food on the plate.
20. I eat the salad bar instead of the school lunch:
- a. Every day
 - b. 3-4 times per week
 - c. 1-2 times a week
 - d. Hardly ever
21. The cafeteria allows me to purchase individual items separately from my meal (or in addition to my meal).
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes

COMMENTS:

Sample National School Lunch Week Press Release

Name
Address
Phone Number

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOCAL SCHOOLS WILL OBSERVE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

The director of the (school district), (SFS Director's name), indicated today that the local schools will observe National School Lunch Week from October (date) through (closing date). The week, proclaimed by the President to highlight the importance of school food service programs, is always a special event in the community. (SFS Director's name) reported that the universal menu will be served in many schools across the nation on (day), October (date), and the (school district) will be participating in this event.

(Add any special events you may have going on as part of the National School Lunch Week promotion and merchandising, e.g., parents invited to participate in the program, special displays, programs, special menu for the day, etc.)

The (school district) is proud of the role which the school food service programs play in providing good nutrition to school children. National School Lunch Week provides us with a reminder of the many fine things happening during the entire year.

The 10 Deadly Sins of Customer Service

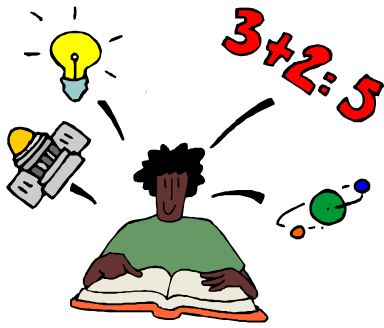
Everyone has pet peeves, things that irritate and annoy. When you were young, knowing what set off your little brother or sister could afford you hours of pleasure.

As adults, we recognize that annoying habits and behaviors are not only bad manners; they can also get you into serious trouble.



Here are 10 “sins” or behaviors that service providers exhibit that customers say annoy them most:

1. **I don’t know.** Customers expect you to know something about the products and services you sell. If you don’t know, the three essential words are “I’ll find out!”
2. **I don’t care.** Customers want you to care about serving them. They want to sense that you take pride in what you’re doing. This reinforces that they’ve made a good choice. When your attitude, conversation and appearance makes it clear you’d rather be somewhere else, they’ll find themselves wishing the same thing.
3. **I can’t be bothered.** Actions do speak louder than words. If your conversation with a co-worker or obviously personal phone call takes precedence over a customer, or if you studiously ignore someone’s attempt to catch your attention, your customers will be annoyed.
4. **I know it all.** When you jump in with a solution or comment before a customer has finished explaining his/her question or problem, that’s being pushy. So, too, is trying to force a customer to make a buying decision too quickly.
5. **I don’t like you.** Customers are sensitive to attitudes that subtly or overtly say, “You’re a nuisance, please go away.” And no one enjoys the occasional encounter with a service person who is openly (or even snidely) hostile.
6. **You don’t know anything.** There are no dumb questions, only dumb answers. When you rudely or insensitively cut off, put down or demean customers for having a confused or wrong idea of what you can do for them, you slam the door in their face. Next time, they’ll look for another door to walk their business through.
7. **We don’t want your kind here.** Prejudice, like customers, comes in all shapes, sizes, ages, colors, educational levels, etc. Every customer is an individual who wants (and deserves) to be treated with courtesy and respect. Your attitudes show in ways you may never suspect.
8. **Don’t come back.** The easiest way to discourage customers is to make clear in words or actions that they’re an inconvenience in your day that you’d just as soon be rid of once and for all. Thanking customers for their patronage and loyalty builds a relationship that can grow and mature.
9. **I’m right, you’re wrong.** One of the easiest traps to fall into is arguing with a customer over something that really is more a point of personal pride or pique than professional service. Customers are not always right, of course, but it doesn’t cost you anything to give them the benefit of the doubt.
10. **Hurry up and wait.** More than any other variable, time may be the number one obsession for people today. Everyone starts with only 24 hours a day. No one wants to waste any of it. Respect your customer’s time -- and you’ll find they respect you in return.



Student Food Preference /Acceptability Survey

Students' likes and dislikes must be considered in determining the marketing plan for the school food service operation. One of the best ways to do this is through a student survey.

School: _____

Grade: _____

DIRECTIONS: On these sheets are statements about food. Check the box if you agree, disagree, or are not sure.

Questions	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
1. Whenever I can, I like to try foods I have never had before.			
2. When I eat a school lunch, I usually eat everything on my tray.			
3. It does not really matter what a person eats.			
4. Lunches served at school are well planned.			
5. Learning about food is important.			
6. It is not necessary to eat vegetables.			
7. I know all I need to know about food.			
8. Advertising foods on TV means they are good for you.			
9. I like food served at school.			
10. Raw vegetables should not be eaten.			
11. Name a food you like to eat between meals.			

Questions	Every Day	About 1/2 the Time	Never
12. How often do you eat lunch prepared in school?			
13. How often do you bring your lunch from home?			
14. How often do you eat your lunch at fast food restaurants?			

Student/Parent Involvement



Return completed form to the Food Service office.

School: _____ Date: _____

Date of Activity: _____

Description of Activity: _____

Number of Students/Parents Involved in Activity: _____

Comments: _____

Date Received in Food Service Office: _____

We Are Pleased to Provide Lunch at School for Teachers!



How is the price for teachers' meals determined? Your school's nutrition program receives varying amounts of reimbursement for each student meal it serves. However, it receives no funds for the preparation of adult meals, so the price for the teacher's meal is based on the actual cost of the meal.

Why are teachers' meals priced so much less than comparable restaurant meals? Your local board of education may assume some of the indirect costs of producing the meal. Such things as the building, insurance, utilities and maintenance are indirect costs. A teacher is charged for only those costs which the school nutrition program must pay.

What serving sizes should teachers receive? Teachers are served food in the same quantities as specified for middle and high school students. Since the school lunch program is designed for students, meals and food items are planned to meet their needs and preferences. Portion sizes may need to be smaller for adults than for students since fewer calories are needed to prevent weight gain.

Teenagers require nutrients for growth and maintenance of body size and functions, while adults need nutrition for maintenance. Teenagers require an average of 2,300 calories per day. Adults need only about 2,000 calories. We are pleased, however, to be able to make meals available to teachers.

Why do school lunches seem so starchy? Carbohydrates (starch) and fats are the major sources of energy in the American diet. Nutritionists recommend that Americans increase their intake of complex carbohydrates (starch) and decrease their intake of fats. Calories from complex carbohydrates such as whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables also add fiber to the diet. Fiber is needed in a healthy diet. Schools are encouraged to limit simple carbohydrates (sugar) and replace desserts with fresh fruits. Students, however, need more calories than do adults. The teenage boy has the greatest caloric need of any human being. The meal is designed for growing students; it may provide excess calories for adults.

Are school lunches healthy by today's standards? In Kentucky, conscientious efforts are made to reduce the amount of salt, fat and sugar in the school meals. This is because eating habits develop early. The healthy diet consists of a variety of foods eaten in moderation. This is the reason most schools offer students a choice of menus or menu items.

Why should teachers eat with students? Teachers are role models for students. When students see teachers eating lunch at school, they recognize that the teacher thinks a balanced meal is important and that the school lunch is good to eat. Also, the teacher is able, during lunch, to encourage students to eat new foods and develop good food habits. For many students, the school cafeteria is the primary source for learning etiquette. The meal also makes an important contribution to the teacher's nutritional needs for the day. A healthy teacher is an asset to the teaching and learning process.

Can teachers and students be involved in the school nutrition program? Yes. In fact federal regulations require the involvement of students and parents and encourage faculty and community involvement. The manager in your school needs your support and input into the planning and services of the program.

How can the school food service manager in my school assist with nutrition education for my students? Your manager has access to many resources in nutrition and nutrition education available from the system central office, the Department of Education and other sources. The manager is also available to visit your classroom to discuss the school lunch program and welcomes your class to the kitchen for tours and demonstrations.

Taste Tests



Taste tests are an important part of introducing new items to children. It helps to have a student committee already in place to assist with the organization of the taste-testing. Four or five students from each class can be selected either through elections, volunteerism, or teacher choice. The students can help you “stay on track” in the selection of vendor items, recipes and menu combos.

Schedule regular tasting times, such as four times a year, for them to anticipate. You might do a session early in the school year, in January, March, and near the end of the school year. Schedule so that their feedback will help with your bid process and the development of food specifications.

Students who are chosen for taste-testing often exhibit pride and responsibility in representing their classmates. Call attention to their contribution by providing a badge for them to wear on tasting days.

Taste-Testing Tips

- Always let the teacher choose whether they want a tasting party.
- Observe foods children are not eating and help introduce them in a new and unusual fashion.
- Try to coordinate foods tasted in the classroom with foods served in the cafeteria when possible.
- Everyone involved must wash his or her hands with soap and water before tasting.
- Encourage but do not force anyone to taste.
- Arrange food, table, and chairs before students arrive. If in the classroom, have arrangements made before food is brought in.

Tasting Party Variations

1. Prepare a tray of fruits in different forms - fresh, canned, juice, or cut in different shapes. Let the children compare textures and tastes of each fruit.
2. Let the children taste protein foods from the meat group. Use nuts, cottage cheese, beans, cheese (using different types of cheese).
3. Use a new menu item as a tasting party. Small samples are provided. Use an evaluation sheet for older students.
4. Have a pizza party and try unusual forms of pizza.
5. Have kabobs. Let the children make fruit kabobs or vegetable kabobs using raw vegetables.
6. Place bite-sized pieces of vegetables on toothpicks and serve with dip.
7. Stress that color often indicates which particular nutrient may be present in the fruit/vegetables and have a color tasting party.
8. Each day of the week feature a vegetable from one of the five groups. Identify it by name on the serving line. For example: broccoli - a flower.
9. Give each classroom teacher a list of the vegetables that will be offered each day for the children to taste, as well as those that will be served in the cafeteria.
10. Encourage the classroom teachers to do further projects based around the vegetable of the day.
11. Prepare a tray of sample raw vegetables included in each group (for example: stems - celery, asparagus, etc.) for the children to taste as they discuss them in the classroom before coming to the cafeteria.
12. Discuss the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet.

Taste-Test Panel

1. Vendor submits samples to warehouse at least three days prior to taste-test.
2. SFS Director develops a taste-test evaluation form for the particular age group involved (Happy and Sad face for elementary school age, 1-10 for older students).
3. Instruct staff on how to prepare food items and how to hand out samples.
4. Follow manufacturer's suggestions for preparation, unless the product has been previously tested and the procedure has been changed.
5. Show students a whole, uncut product, but serve in smaller pieces.
6. Instruct students on how to taste-test.
7. Ask students to rate the product based on their own perception, not their friends'.
8. Ask students to be honest and ask older students to make specific comments.
9. Vendors are invited to taste-test. They are not introduced and are instructed not to interact with the students until after the taste-test has occurred. AT the end of the test, vendors are introduced and students are encouraged to make verbal comments, ask questions, etc.
10. Results of the taste-test should be made available to all participating vendors. Mail to vendors who do not attend.

Planning

1. Identify the group to test the food.
2. Decide on number of people tasting.
3. Schedule a time for the tasting.
4. Identify the foods to be tasted.



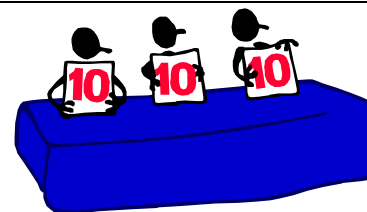
Super Choices for Tasting Parties

Vegetables	Fruits	Whole Grains
Broccoli	Apricots	Bagels
Cabbage	Cantaloupe	Barley (as in Vegetable-Barley Soup)
Carrots	Fig Nuggets	Bran Muffins
Cauliflower	Grapefruit	Brown Rice
Green Pepper	Honey Dew Melon	English Muffins - try with spreads
Lentils	Kiwi	Oatmeal
Lima Beans/Butter Beans	Fig Nuggets	Oatmeal Bread
Spinach	Mango	Oatmeal Muffins
Squash, especially dark orange	Papaya	Pancakes with fruit toppings
Stir Fry Veggies	Red Plums	Pilaf (Bulgar, Wheat)
Zucchini	Raisins	Pita Bread
	Strawberries	Raisin Bread
	Watermelon	

Evaluating the Food

1. Develop an evaluation form or use the samples on the following pages.
2. Use the information you get from staff and customers to make further changes in your recipes.
3. Re-taste test the products after each modification.

Food Taste-Testing Evaluation for Single Item



Evaluator: _____

Food Item: _____

Please place an X in the box that best describes your impression of this food item.

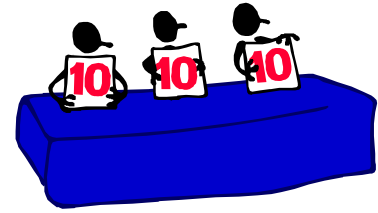
Evaluation				
Characteristic	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
External Color				
Internal Color				
Aroma				
Flavor				
Texture				
External Appearance				
Internal Appearance				
Moistness				
Portion Size				
Temperature				
Garnish				
Eye Appeal				
TOTAL SCORES				

1. In what specific ways could this product be improved?

2. What further recipe modifications do you recommend?

3. Please provide specific comments about ingredients or preparation techniques:

Food Taste-Testing Evaluation for Multiple Items



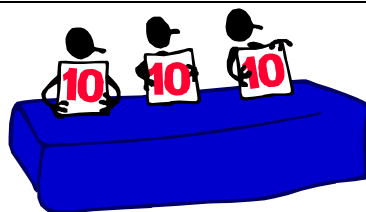
Your Name: _____

Food: _____

List the foods you tasted today and complete the information about each item.

Evaluation						
Foods Tasted	Have you tried this food before?	This food is:				
		Not Very Good	Okay	Good	Very Good	Delicious

Comments:



Product Evaluation Form													
Scoring 1. Fair/Poor 2. Good 3. Very Good	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	
Color													
Appearance													
Size													
Liquid Content													
Smell													
Texture													
Flavor													
Other													
TOTAL SCORE													
Place A in this box if you thought the food was Acceptable													
Place U in this box if you thought the food was Unacceptable													
Comments:													
Evaluator:										Date:			

Taste and Tell Party Marketing Kit



Target Audience: All students and staff

Purpose: To interest students in low-fat foods and to discover low-fat products that students enjoy.

Time Required: Approximate planning time is one month

Performance Objectives: Upon completion, participants will:

- Equate low-fat foods with fun
- Associate low-fat foods with good taste
- Have an open mind about new foods and low-fat foods
- Objectively evaluate unfamiliar foods
- Move into the early adopters category

Kit Contents

- Instruction sheet for managers
- Promotional flyer for distribution to students and staff
- Poster/bulletin board posters
- Ballot sheets
- Taste and Tell Scoreboard
- Fact sheet for parents

Additional Materials Required

- Table for samples
- Paper table covering and decorations for sample table
- Napkins and/or portion dishes for samples
- Plastic or paper visors or hats to identify sample servers
- Copy of time and assignment sheet

Planning

- Food service administrator will identify and order products for students to sample.
- Manager will enlist YAC committee or recruit a student group to run the tasting party.
- Teachers will assist with “tell” details, and participate in the Taste and Tell themselves.
- Results will guide manager and food service administrator in ordering decisions for new low-fat food products.

Count-down Schedule

Day 30: Consult with principal and reproduce parent fact sheets on back of take-home menus.

Day 25: Meet with food service staff, explain and assign duties.

Day 20: Get names of student helpers from teachers.

Day 7: Meet with students, explain duties, and provide written instructions.

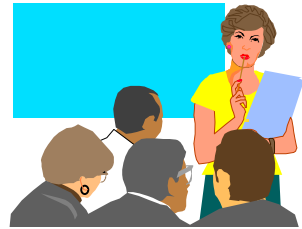
Day 5: Decorate bulletin board.

Day 3: Distribute promotional flyer.

Day 2: Decorate cafeteria and check all supplies on hand.

Day 1: Tasting and voting.

Taste and Tell Party Manager Instructions



1. Meet with principal and decide on test items (at least three). Check on availability of visors or hats for student servers to wear.
2. Explain project to committee of teachers and ask for a coordinator who will recruit the student servers and assist with the voting procedures.
3. Reproduce fact sheet with menus that go home with students.
4. Meet with food service staff to assign members to decorate the sample table and bulletin boards, arrange for hats or make visors for student servers to wear, and assign staff to cut out smiley/frowny faces for ballots.
5. Order paper table covering, materials for decorating, and napkins and/or portion dishes for sampling days.
6. Reproduce promotional flyer for distribution in the cafeteria.
7. Develop bulletin board to promote Taste and Tell party.
8. Contact teachers who agreed to help and explain balloting.
9. Collect participants' names.
10. Call a meeting of students and tell them exactly how Taste and Tell will work. Servers are to serve samples as appetizers, while students wait in line. They are to tell students to vote their choice. Have students do one role-play walk-through rehearsal. Provide written reminder instructions.
11. Reproduce smiley/frowny faces. Prepare ballot boxes near cashier, clearly marked with name of food being sampled. Smiley/frowny face ballots should be available near the ballot boxes. A teacher must be in charge of ballot distribution.
12. No vendor or vendor representative is allowed in the food service area during testing. All samples for testing must be purchased, not contributed.
13. Post results the day following each testing.
14. Report results to SFS Director.

Taste & Tell Party in the School Cafeteria



This Week
Free Samples

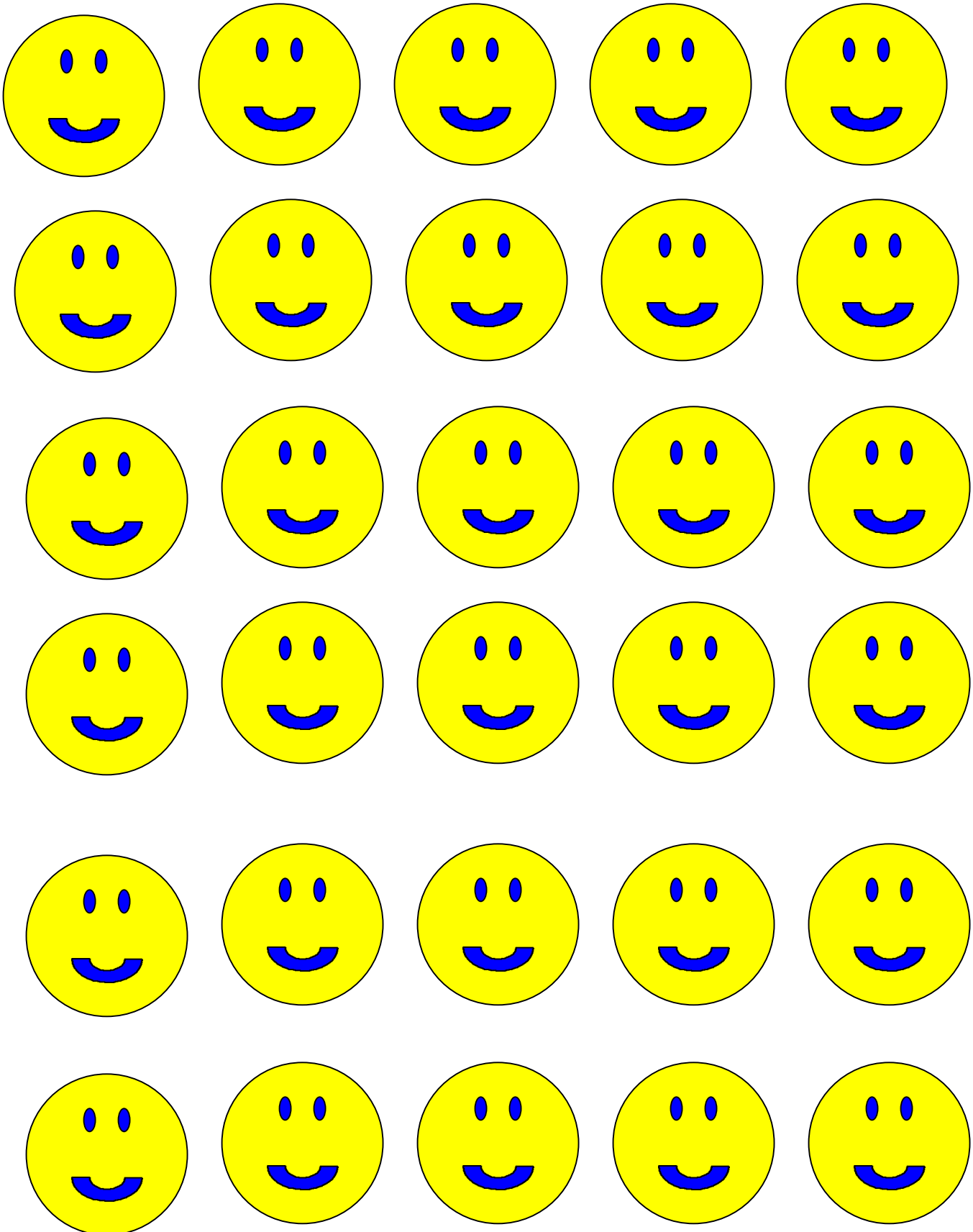
Vote for your favorite!

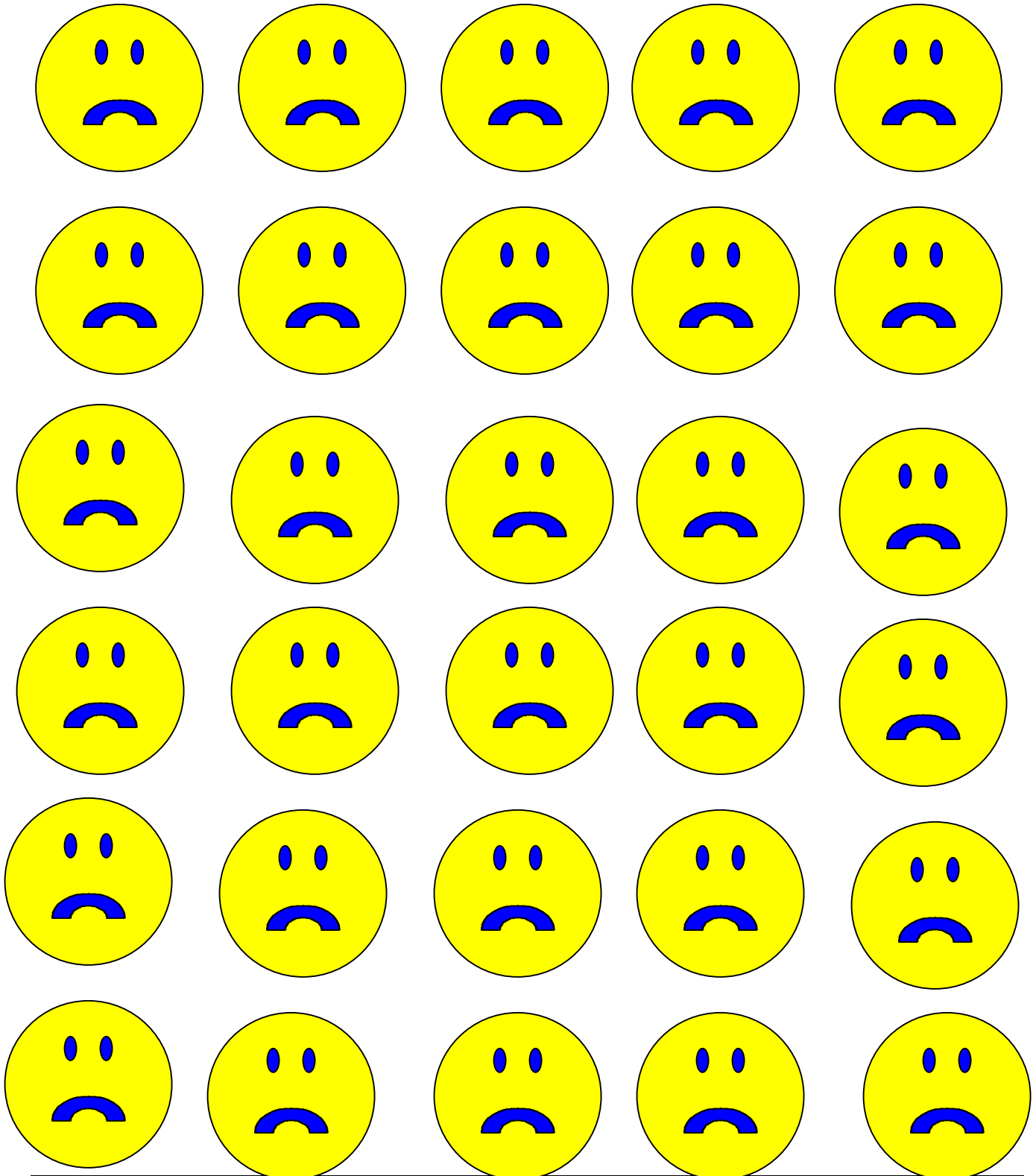
What you want is what you get!

Taste & Tell



Visit the Cafeteria Tomorrow for Free Appetizers Y'all Come!





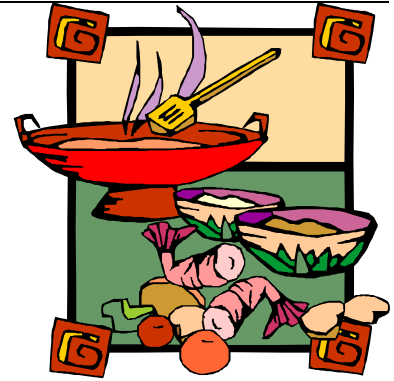


Taste and Tell Party Scoreboard

Food Sampled	Like 	Don't Like 

A Message to Parents From Your School Cafeteria

About the Taste and Tell Party



The menus we send home with your child are planned with two thoughts in mind:

1. To give your children meals they really enjoy.
2. To provide your child with the best possible meals.

We provide:

- Recipes made fresh daily from the finest ingredients.
- Lunch that supplies at least 1/3 of all the nutrients your child needs.
- Menus that are varied and balanced.
- Choices that follow the Dietary Guidelines reduced fat standards.

Children look at it this way: Food they enjoy and food that is good for them are two different things altogether. We have to bring those two goals together. “Together” is the operative word. The school food service staff can’t do this by ourselves -- we need your help!

The school food service staff knows that you want what is best for your children. Like all of us, you’re bound to be concerned about the high cost of health care. By the time your children are grown, the cost of being sick will be even higher.

None of us like to think about being sick, so let’s think about being well, about how we stay well! If we want to be well, we have to eat well. We can prevent a lot of chronic disease. The misery and expense of long-term illnesses like heart disease and cancer, diabetes and high blood pressure come from the way we eat.

The school cafeteria is offering low-fat choices. **We hope your children will choose:**

- Low-fat milk this year and skim milk next year.
- Baked chicken instead of fried chicken.
- Fruit instead of cake.
- Salads and vegetables with the plate lunch.

This month, we are going to test some new ideas in low-fat foods. We’re calling it a Taste & Tell party. Your children will get free appetizers, which are samples of low-fat foods. They will vote for those they like, and we’ll put them on the menu. We’re already serving more baked and broiled meats. We’re even baking French fries instead of frying them. We offer low-fat dairy products (though we also must serve whole milk).

Please support our efforts. Talk up low fat. Ask your children to help plan home meals to lower the fat. Go over the menu with your children; they know which of these foods are high and which are low in fat. Encourage them to make the good choices.

We want the same thing that you do: What’s best for your children!

Please feel free to let us know if you have any ideas on how we can improve our services to you.

EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEES

Successful school food service programs require appropriate use of human resources:

1. Ensure that staff members appear neat and clean, wear flattering hair restraints, and use colorful, fresh aprons or tops for meal service.
2. Train employees to understand Offer vs. Serve so that students select meals to meet their nutritional needs.
3. Serve comparable and appropriate portions to all customers by using the correct portioning utensils that are designated on the daily work schedule and standardized recipes.
4. Train employees to handle dishes and foods to avoid touching surfaces that customers will place in their mouths and to use plastic gloves when touching food with their hands.
5. Staff should be cheerful and smiling, show that they care, and be courteous and friendly.
6. Staff should treat everyone equitably.
7. Serve food items to customers directly rather than pre-plating food on trays, unless a particular meal is marketed as pre-plated.
8. Train employees to respect and accommodate, to the greatest extent possible, special nutritional needs as well as religious, ethnic, and cultural preferences.
9. Employees should relate to students at their developmental level by having positive interactions and understanding issues of concern to customers.
10. Encourage students to eat meals and try new foods.
11. Train employees to express interest in the customer as an individual by calling students by name.
12. Employees should respond according to procedures during emergency situations, such as hurricanes and outbreaks of food-borne illness.
13. Train employees in the Heimlich maneuver and common first aid procedures.
14. Make sure staff circulate in the dining areas during meals and are easily accessible to customers.
15. Ensure that customers receive food items of consistent portions, similar quality, appropriate temperature, and appropriate amounts and form for their age.
16. Establish standards that specify the number of meals to be served per minute.
17. Schedule work backward from the time food is needed on the serving line to ensure that meal service is on schedule.
18. Ensure that the cafeteria is free of insects and rodents.
19. Train employees to wear plastic gloves and to wash their hands at the appropriate times.
20. Place trash cans behind the dish return area.
21. Create interest by varying dinnerware to include baskets, compartment trays, flat trays, monkey dishes, and plates.
22. Design the facility so that employee work flow and customer traffic flow is smooth, organized, and does not intersect.
23. Provide an adequate number of serving lines/areas to accommodate potential customers each period.
24. Plan service of menu items so that the number of customers attracted to each line is approximately the same and promotes a steady flow of customers during each meal period.
25. Place the point-of-sale station at the end of the serving line(s).
26. Train employees to use established procedures for documenting and handling customer calls and complaints.
27. Enhance appearance and speed of the serving line by posting diagrams showing how food is to be placed on the line.
28. Control customer traffic flow so that customers select their menu choices before exiting by the point-of-sale station.
29. Arrange for adults to select beverages, other than milk, from an attractive area in the cafeteria.
30. Establish procedures to test the temperature of foods periodically during the serving period.
31. Keep meal costs low by establishing procedures to prevent theft of food from the serving area.
32. Place food items for service in the pans that are listed on the standardized recipe and according to the serving line diagram.
33. Purchase (based on the customer turnover rate) an adequate number of trays, bowls, and flatware.
34. Provide flatware appropriate for food or menu items being served.



35. Design serving areas so that customers spend no more than 1/3 of the meal period waiting to be served.
36. Schedule work so that foods are held for minimal amounts of time, employees are at their serving stations, and serving lines are ready when customers enter the line.
37. Keep self-serve bars supplied with foods and assign employees to check at scheduled intervals for both neatness and temperatures.
38. Ensure that trays, flatware, and dishes are clean and dry when they are picked up by the customers.

Guiding Principles

USDA regards employees' health and welfare as critically related to their ability to contribute to USDA's mission. USDA strives to help employees achieve and maintain balance between work and personal family responsibilities. Agencies should identify positions that are suitable for work flexibilities in order to accommodate employees' needs. Supervisors should implement the various alternative work schedules, leave options, etc., in such a fashion that they will enhance the work of the office.

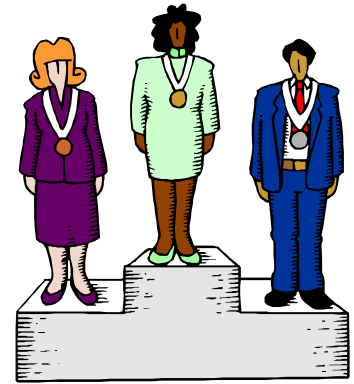
USDA agencies should incorporate guidance on flexible work arrangements in all existing supervisory and diversity training. Supervisors and employees should work together so that the USDA's mission is enhanced and employees receive the support needed for work/life balance. Employees should communicate their desire to use available work options. Supervisors should carefully consider requests of employees before suggesting alternatives.

Agencies should recognize supervisors who help employees balance their work and personal/family responsibilities by encouraging use of appropriate flexible work arrangements. When recognizing a supervisor's achievement, be sure to consider whether performance positively impacts the mission of USDA.

All employees, depending on the work requirements of the position, should be given an equal opportunity to use appropriate flexible work arrangements. These flexibilities should be used to motivate employees and increase productivity.

Agencies should market and communicate information by providing seminars, workshops, and printed materials to employees. Information on these flexibilities should be included in the orientation package for all new employees.

Use a variety of tools, including surveys, focus groups, customer service standards, and organizational performance measures, to assess the effectiveness of the program.





Food Service Workers

	→	Merchandising Mogul
	→	Computer Genius
	→	Chef Extraordinaire
	→	Salesman
	→	Administrator
	→	Maitre'd
	→	Retailer
	→	Human Resource
	→	Public Relations
	→	Disaster Emergency



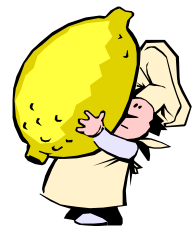
Meet the Staff



Instructions: Walk around the room and find a person who can sign each of the spaces. A different person must sign each space. Have fun!

Find a person who:

Has a poster of the Food Guide Pyramid	Uses an oven to prepare school lunch	Went a week without eating a candy bar	Ate raisin bran for breakfast this morning
Has worked in school food service for 5 years or longer	Drove over 25 miles to get here today	Loves to bake rolls	Is a UK fan
Has eaten salad bar in the last two weeks	Has a child that plays ball	Is excited about an upcoming event	Is a UofL fan
Loves children in their school	Raises spinach in their garden	Likes to eat brussels sprouts	Has grandchildren
Likes to play cards	Is starting their first year in the school food service profession	Has been to another country	Likes to try new recipes
Has children under 10 years old	Likes to fill out paperwork	Eats five fruits and vegetables a day	Wants to make sure that children know about good nutrition





How Are We Doing?

Please take a moment to complete the following evaluation.

Is the cafeteria staff clean in appearance? ____yes ____no

Is the cafeteria staff pleasant and friendly? ____yes ____no

Is the cafeteria staff helpful when you have a question or concern? ____yes ____no

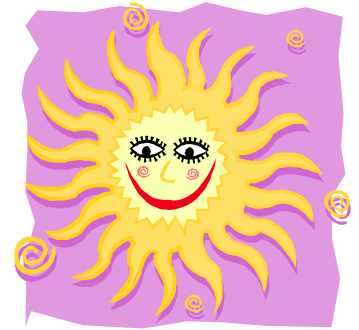
Is the cafeteria atmosphere attractive and accessible? ____yes ____no

Does the cafeteria have promotions? ____yes ____no

COMMENTS:

Excellent Attitude

Show your customers your excellent attitude!



1. Smile.
2. Dress like a school food service professional in an attractive uniform or apron.
3. Be friendly and helpful to each customer every day.
4. Have a neat, clean appearance including your hair (with a hair restraint), clean uniform, clean apron, polished shoes, neat and unpolished fingernails, no jewelry.

Marketing Evaluation

Marketing	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	N/A
1. A variety of menu choices for reimbursable meals are offered.				
2. At least one specialty menu is offered daily (salad bar, potato bar, taco bar, specialty cart, boxed lunches).				
3. Offer vs. Serve is implemented correctly.				
4. Special efforts are made to promote the selection of reimbursable meal that includes five menu items.				
5. The serving line is set up to display the menu choices attractively.				
6. The serving line is attractive, neat, and clean at the beginning, middle, and end of the serving period.				
7. Food on the serving line is garnished appropriately.				
8. The school food service staff shows their excellent attitude by wearing matching uniforms or aprons.				
9. The staff shows their excellent attitude by being friendly and helpful to each customer.				
10. The school food service staff shows their excellent attitude by being neat and clean.				

Describe an action to provide maximum variety of menu choices:	Describe an action to ensure that food is attractive on the serving line:	Describe an action to help school food service employees show their excellent attitude toward customers.
--	---	--

How to Be a Better Manager



1. Think positively.
2. Concentration is the cornerstone of efficiency.
3. Frustration is a natural part of management.
4. Be respected: Don't worry about being liked.
5. Accept that you will not always be right.
6. Be "in the now".
7. Be patient with yourself.
8. Listen for the message - direct and indirect.
9. Develop your people.
10. Be supportive, not critical.
11. Maintain a sense of humor.
12. Managers are human too.
13. Don't misuse your authority.
14. Be realistic about your weaknesses.
15. Be an example.
16. Communicate up and down.
17. Criticism can help you grow.
18. Give yourself pleasure.
19. Be available.
20. Be fair.
21. Acknowledge good work.
22. Delegate responsibility.
23. Be flexible.
24. Don't procrastinate.
25. Keep harmony within and around you.
26. Deal with performance not personality.
27. Be a willing negotiator.
28. Be decisive.
29. Don't be complacent.
30. Think of everyday as Friday.

Recognizing Your Employees



Make recognizing your employees as part of your daily routine. Good managers remember to motivate their employees, and great managers do it every day. Here are some proven methods for making sure that praising employees becomes part of your routine:

- Make employees a part of your weekly “to do” list. Add the names of the people who report to you to your list of goals to accomplish, and then cross off the names as you praise them.
- Use voice mail or e-mail to make sure that your employees realize how much you appreciate them.
- Keep note cards on your desk and at the end of each day, write thank-you notes to any employee who made a difference that day.
- Ask your staff to write brief mission statements and review them periodically to ensure that employees feel productive.
- Give employees a success file periodically with their accomplishments enclosed.
- Be specific in the praise you give employees and do not praise ordinary performance.
- Use praise to improve poor performance.
- Do not assume that praise is enough. Superior performance deserves more than compliments. Praise starts to ring hollow if that’s all the employee gets. Bonuses, raises, interesting job assignments, and other forms of appreciation are absolutely essential.
- Don’t reward the wrong kind of behavior by having someone clean up another employee’s mess. Ensure that the employee who made a mistake corrects him/herself.
- Never give employees bad news on Friday - this demoralizes the staff and allows time for brooding over the weekend.
- Educate your employees up front in the expectations you have of them.
- When criticizing, do it oral -- when praising, do it in writing.

Quotes for Managers

“You do not lead by hitting people over the head -- that’s assault, not leadership”. -- Dwight D. Eisenhower

“Business without profit is not business any more than a pickle is candy.” -- Charles F. Abbot

“The essence of real leadership is to allow your people to see your need and desire for learning. Your actions speak more than your words. Today’s leaders must be students of change first, before they become teachers of change to others.” -- Jack Kahl, Manco, Inc.

“I learned that a great leader is a man who has the ability to get other people to do what they don’t want to do and like it.” -- Harry Truman

“There go my people. I must find out where they are going so I can lead them.” -- Alexandre Ledru-Rollin

Sample Work Schedule

Time	7-1/2 Hour Manager	6 Hour Assistant	5 Hour Assistant	4 Hour Assistant
7:30-8:00 am	Make coffee or tea for teachers			
8:00-8:30 am	Help with lasagna sauce	Prepare lasagna		
8:30-9:00 am	Lunch count - Tickets		Dip fruit and refrigerate	
9:00-9:30 am				
9:30-10:00 am	Teachers' Salads		Wash vegetables for salad	
10:00-10:30 am	Cut bread and butter	Prepare bread crumbs for fried chicken tomorrow		Cut up vegetables for salad
10:30-11:00 am			Put out desserts	
11:00-11:30 am	Eat lunch - 20 min. Put food on steam table	Eat lunch - 20 min. Put food on steam table	Eat lunch - 20 min. Wash pots and pans	Set up line-napkins, straws, dishes, etc. Mix salad for first lunch
11:30 am - 12:00 pm	Cashier	Serving Set up for next line	Serving Help in dish room	Back up line Dish room
12:00-12:30 pm	Serving	Serving Set up for next line	Serving Help in dish room	Back up line Dish room
12:30-1:00 pm	Serving	Serving Put away food	Cashier 10 min. break	Back up in Dish room
1:00-1:30 pm	Count money 10 min. break Help clean tables	10 min. break Clean tables	Clean steam table	Eat lunch - 20 min.
1:30-2:00pm	Prepare bank deposit and reports	Clean up		Clean dish room
2:00-2:30 pm	Place orders			Help with kitchen cleanup
2:30-3:00 pm	Take topping out of freezer and put in refrigerator for tomorrow			

Session Rating Form

Name of Session: _____ Date: _____

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. The information was presented in a way I could understand.				
2. The session accomplished its objectives.				
3. I can use the information that was presented.				
4. The workbook and visuals were helpful.				
5. The meeting room was comfortable for learning.				
Most helpful feature of session:				
Least helpful feature of session:				
Comments:				

RESOURCES

- Florida Citrus Commission, Lakeland FL
- Mealtime Sampler, DFNCs, 5340 W. Fayetteville Road, Atlanta, GA 30349
- Quality Measures for Georgia's School Nutrition Program
- Menu Design Participant Workbook, Summer School Food Service Manager Workshop, Alabama State Department of Education, Child Nutrition Programs, 1992
- The Mechanics of the Bulletin Board, Division of Recognition and Special Events, Kentucky Department of Education
- National Dairy Council, Rosemont, IL 60018-5616

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